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EURIPIDES AND THE SPIRIT OF HIS DRAMAS

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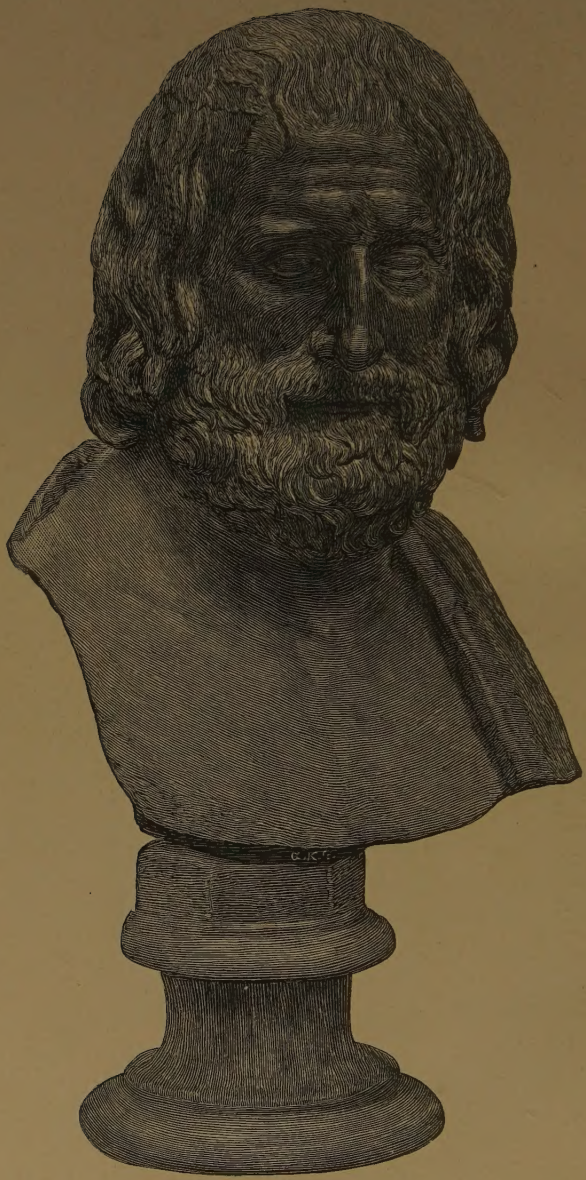

BUST OF EURIPIDES IN THE BRUNSWICK MUSEUM

EURIPIDES

AND

THE SPIRIT OF HIS DRAMAS

BY

PAUL DECHARME

PROFESSOR OF GREEK POETRY IN THE
FACULTÉ DES LETTRES AT PARIS

TRANSLATED
BY JAMES LOEB, A. B.

SECOND EDITION 1909

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TO
M. JULES GIRARD
MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE
HONORARY PROFESSOR OF GREEK POETRY
IN THE FACULTÉ DES LETTRES
AT PARIS

THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

EURIPIDES is the most modern of the Greek tragic poets, but he is an elusive poet, not easy to comprehend. Many even of his fellow-countrymen failed to understand him. His character, his philosophy, and his art, therefore, have peculiar interest for the modern reader; for, while his tragedies engage our sympathies and appeal to our hearts, his elusiveness pricks our intellectual curiosity.

Among the many studies that have been made of this great poet the late Professor Paul Decharme's "Euripide et l'Esprit de son Théatre" is noteworthy at once for its breadth of view, power of close analysis, and vigor of presentation. I had greatly profited by the author's learned and persuasive treatment of his theme in this book, and thought that I might render good service by translating it into English; for there are still some English-speaking students whose unfamiliarity with French bars their way to books written in that language. Professor Decharme, with whom I had the good fortune to be personally acquainted, readily gave his consent, and continued to manifest lively and friendly interest in my undertaking as it progressed.

A few errors have been corrected. These were mainly typographical and in the footnotes. In all other respects, I have adhered as closely as possible to the text of the book as published in 1893. It seemed best, however, to substitute for Professor Decharme's translations of Euripides' verse into French prose some authoritative English version of the Greek original. Nobody else has succeeded so well in rendering the poet's works into our own tongue as that eminent English scholar, Mr. Arthur S. Way. With the greatest courtesy, for which I am profoundly grateful, Mr. Way has not only allowed me to use his printed metrical translations of Euri-

pides' Tragedies for this purpose, but has also placed at my disposal hitherto unpublished versions of the Fragments.

To my dear teacher and friend, Professor John Williams White, I am deeply indebted for constant encouragement and assistance. He has generously contributed an Introduction, and has given the whole book final revision. Without his aid I should not have ventured to publish it.

I hope that Professor Decharme's book in its English dress will be of service to students of Euripides. It has been a pleasant task to translate it, but most of all I cherish the relations into which it brought me with its author, a kindly and learned man, whose recent death all scholars will deplore.

Jena,
November 9, 1905.

THE TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

THE first edition of this translation was exhausted much sooner than I had ventured to expect. It is an altogether agreeable surprise to find so widespread an interest in the Greek Drama in an age when we are constantly told that there is no time and no need for a classical training. University statistics have been showing a steady falling off in the number of students who keep up their Greek and Latin studies. Now that we have such excellent English versions of many ancient authors, there is fortunately a growing disposition to recommend them to the rising generation. For those who do not care "to swim the Charles" the bridge is invitingly open!

If a straw points the direction in which the wind is setting, the hope is perhaps warranted that, by bringing out a second edition of a book whose author knew, as few have known, how to give a vivid and true picture of a great Greek writer, a still larger circle of readers may become acquainted with its attractive contents.

Munich,
June, 1909.

PREFACE
BY THE AUTHOR

IF it occasion surprise that I should publish a study of the dramas of Euripides, I beg to call attention to the fact that exactly half a century has elapsed since the first edition of M. Patin's *Tragiques grecs* appeared. Although that excellent but too rarely read work contains many a page which has not grown old, delicate analyses which cannot be bettered, and judgments which are still of undisputed authority, I have thought that even to-day some interest might attach to a fresh study of Euripides which should follow a different plan from that of my predecessor and profit by new discoveries and criticisms. Not that the papyri discovered in the tombs of Egypt, the vase-paintings on which scenes from tragedies are depicted, the numerous corrections and new interpretations—often felicitous—to which the poet's plays have for fifty years been subjected, have revealed to us a Euripides before unknown. But those who desire to have as faithful a picture of him as possible must not neglect the new features, even though they be very slight, which have been added to his physiognomy.

Euripides was a philosopher and a critic,—a remark that has often been repeated since ancient times. I have questioned this philosopher, this critic, curiously and insistently, in an effort to make him say what he thought of nature, of religion, of society, of the men and women among whom he lived. I have collected his statements about these matters, but have not striven to coördinate them too closely nor yielded too far to the temptation to derive from them hard-and-fast deductions. Perhaps we must abandon the hope of knowing to what extent Euripides was an original thinker, but he deserves a hearing as one who bears witness to the ideas and prepossessions of his time.

In the first part of this work Euripides' critical spirit is exam-

ined; in the second part his dramatic genius is studied. In this second part I have attempted to call attention to certain points which have been less carefully elucidated than others, but which well merit the trouble of investigation. In doing this it was often impossible not to repeat in another form what I had said before. As it is a matter of some consequence to know all the subjects which the poet may have put upon the stage, I have endeavored to make the best of the information handed down to us from antiquity about those tragedies of which fragments only have survived. Some methods which are peculiar to his art have been subjected to exact analysis. I have made a close examination of the prologues and of the intervention of deities in the last act. There will also be found a fairly extended comment on the part played by the chorus in Euripides and on the characteristics of his lyrical passages, which to my thinking have not been fully appreciated in the traditional view. It is not, then, a complete study of Euripides' work as a dramatist which I offer to the reader (for example, nothing will be found about the *Cyclops*, a play which would throw no light on the subject which I am specially investigating), but a study in which preference is given to the treatment of those matters which appear to be open to controversy.

A few plates appear in the text of this volume: the bust in the Museum at Brunswick, and three drawings of the only vase-paintings in which authentic reproductions of certain scenes of the poet's lost tragedies may be assumed with a degree of certainty.

No one will be surprised if I frequently invoke the authority of the distinguished Hellenist who in our day has contributed so much to a better understanding of Euripides,—M. Henri Weil; nor if I occasionally quote from the works of Herr von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, which sometimes provoke discussion, but are always interesting and suggestive.

November, 1892.

INTRODUCTION

GÖTHE once remarked with temper to Eckermann that a poet whom Socrates called his friend, whom Aristotle esteemed, whom Menander admired, and for whom Sophocles and the city of Athens put on mourning when they learnt of his death, "must certainly have been somebody." He was indignantly protesting against the belittling estimate of Euripides which Schlegel had expressed in his series of brilliant lectures on Dramatic Literature delivered in Vienna in 1808.

Euripides may well rest content with the favorable judgment of his peers, despite the jibes of a hostile Greek rival who vehemently refused him recognition even in Hades. That was Aristophanes's inimical attitude towards him; but Dante thought him worthy of companionship with Homer, albeit—

"Nel primo cinghio del carcere cieco."

It is a significant fact that the poets, with the notable exception of the great comedian, have thought well of Euripides. Many of them have paid him the high tribute of imitation. No other Greek poet, except Homer, has made so deep and lasting an impression on ancient and modern literature.

Even his comic rival, in one of those rare moments when he reveals the true Aristophanes, softly confesses that he imitated his style of speech. The tribute of imitation is continuous. In Euripides's own lifetime the youths of Athens set diligently to work writing tragedy in his manner, "a shoal of little songsters, tragedians by the myriad." The Greek tragic poets of the succeeding centuries patterned their plays upon his. The poets of the New Comedy made him and not Aristophanes their model; Menander repeatedly acknowledges his obligations to him. Euripides thus indirectly influenced Roman Comedy. Early Roman

tragedy turned first to him in its adaptations, and Lucretius and Ovid drew from the same source.

Among the moderns, the genius of Racine, who knew Greek excellently, was quickened not by Sophocles, but by Euripides. Four of his tragedies have their source directly in plays of Euripides. Racine declared that he knew no tragedy so affecting as the Alcestis, and he himself wrote an Alcestis, but thought so ill of it, in comparison with the original, that he destroyed it before his death. Milton felt and expressed great admiration for Euripides's plays, and in his twenty-third sonnet makes pathetic reference to one of his noblest characters. Göthe derived the conception of his Iphigenie and Helena from Euripides. The Medea roused Byron's impetuous spirit, and the fiery Alfieri both imitated and translated Euripides. This ancient poet has influenced Swinburne, William Morris and Browning. The last, in Balaustion's Adventure and Aristophanes' Apology, has nobly rendered two plays into English in versions that are a permanent part of the great heritage of English literature.

During his lifetime Euripides roused violent antagonisms. He is an interesting example of an unusual type, an elderly man with an open mind. He held advanced views on most subjects. He was an innovator as regards both the spirit and the form of tragedy; and yet he was nearly sixty years of age when the Medea was brought out, the third in order of time of his extant plays. The middle-aged and elderly men of Athens regarded him, some with alarm and suspicion, others with open detestation. This accounts for the fact that is credibly reported that he secured the first prize only four times in his lifetime. The judges in the tragic contests were elderly citizens. But the young fellows and the liberals in general idolized him. In the Clouds of Aristophanes the young blood Pheidippides and his father are dining together, although their relations are already strained. The old man, hoping for a

reconciliation, courteously proposes that his son shall take the lyre and sing a lay of Simonides or something from Aeschylus. "Simonides, indeed," says the son, "he's a worthless poet; and Aeschylus,—he's chock-full of nothing but noise," and then he proceeds to sing an unholy rhesis from Euripides. Again, in the Frogs, Aeacus relates that when Euripides came down to the lower world, he began at once to show off, and the crowd down there simply went wild when they heard his antilogies and twists and turns, and declared that he was by all odds the best of poets. Aristophanes would have us believe that it was only cut-purses, burglars and parricides that liked him. But there is abundant testimony not only that contemporaries such as Socrates and Sophocles admired and esteemed him, but also that after his death he had almost universal vogue.[1]

If poets in all ages have thought well of him, and if after his death in ancient times he was universally regarded, how is the fact to be explained that professional scholars, teachers and all that sort, since the middle of the eighteenth century until a recent period, have generally considered him an inferior poet, some of them even confounding the functions of the critic with those of the preacher, and saying that he was not only a bad poet, but a bad man?

Their opinion, doubtless, has been influenced by the judgments of two great men of antiquity, one an unfriendly poet, the other a rhetorician and critic. But the judgments of these two men are poles apart and must not be confounded.

Aristophanes criticises Euripides constantly and unsparingly. He parodies passages from forty-five of his tragedies. Euripides constitutes no small part of Aristophanic comedy. The comic poet attacks his mother, his wife, his intimate friend. If we may believe him, Euripides is a closet poet who knows nothing of life. He draws his inspiration from books, and furthermore ap-

[1] See p. 13 ff.

propriates not only the thoughts but also the words of others. He degrades the tragic art by his babble and chatter, his far-fetched stage devices, his scenes from low life, his philosophizing heroines, his panders from the nursery, his lewd women shameless and unabashed, his murthering of good music, his disbelief in the gods. He is an unholy man, corrupter alike of the taste and of the morals of the public! Aristophanes began this attack upon Euripides in his first extant comedy, the Acharnians, and, himself a young fellow of twenty, ridiculed the realism of Euripides, then a man nearly sixty years old, in a comic episode of great power. To read it, one would think that Euripides's plays consisted chiefly of tragic paraphernalia. He devotes one whole play to him, the Thesmophoriazusae, the most laughable of comedies. Euripides is introduced as a character, and is placed in all sorts of ridiculous and degrading situations. Finally in the Frogs he ridicules his alleged defects as a poet with exquisite skill, and assaults the immorality of his teaching in scathing satire.

Like the Elizabethan poets, Euripides was a realist, but in a finer and more imaginative way. He refused to be bound by the rules of tragic art that his predecessors had formulated, and he wrought important changes in both the form and the spirit of tragedy. By his original treatment of themes that were not new he became the precursor of the modern drama, and unless we claim that the ideal treatment of the heroic legends which finds so noble and beautiful expression in Aeschylus and Sophocles was the only admissible form in dramatic writing, he must not be condemned without a hearing. As to Aristophanes, his manifest exaggerations should have put professional critics on their guard. He was a comic poet, not a reformer with beetling brow and of stern mien, who went about with a club, as Mr. Browning represents him, wherewith to thrash and pulverize the brood of fools. A comic poet's first business is to make his audience laugh, and

it should not be forgotten that his strictures are always to be taken with allowance. Here the corrective is Aristophanes's portraiture of Socrates in the Clouds. Who believes that Socrates was such a man as is there represented? But there is a difference: Aristophanes is not good-natured in his jibes at Euripides. It is hardly to be doubted that he swung his comic lash over Euripides with special vigor because of personal feeling. It seems likely that the elder poet ignored the early attacks of the budding genius of the comic stage.

> "The Tragic Master in a moody muse
> Passed him unhailing, and it hurts — it hurts."

Euripides, we know, was singularly indifferent to opinion, whereas Aristophanes was singularly thin-skinned. And he grew jealous of the older poet, for he realized that his real rival in the theatre was not the other poets of the Old Comedy, but this veteran of the tragic stage who roused the vehement enthusiasm of the young men of Athens.

The other ancient critic of Euripides was Aristotle, in whose judgments we rightly place confidence. He renders them with tempered reason and without feeling. In the Poetics he condemns Euripides's use of machinery in the unravelling of the plot; his delineations of character; his separation of the chorus from the action of the play; his employment of the element of the irrational; his realism. Elsewhere, both in the Poetics and in the Rhetoric, Aristotle expresses his esteem for Euripides, calling him the most tragic of poets, and nowhere does he criticise him as a teacher of immorality.

There can be no doubt that the opinion of modern scholars has been influenced by the invective of Aristophanes and the austere judgments of Aristotle. Furthermore, when these scholars had assumed a critical attitude towards Euripides, they naturally sought to justify it: they have ignored his merits and magnified his faults.

Göthe, speaking specifically of Schlegel, declares that the professional critics have sheltered themselves behind the authority of the schoolmasters, and from this position of vantage have not hesitated to censure dogmatically a great poet whom they should have addressed with reverence, on bended knees.

Euripides, then, has not had fair treatment. It remained the task of some man of preëminent ability, who possessed both a scholar's learning and authority and a poet's imagination and insight, to attempt to reveal the true Euripides. The late Professor Paul Decharme of the University of Paris has rendered the poet and lovers of poetry this great service in the convincing and eloquent book which Mr. Loeb now offers to the public in an English version.

JOHN WILLIAMS WHITE

Harvard University,
October 13, 1905.

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ERRATA

The numbers refer to the page and line counting from the top.

PAGE	LINE	
4,	11	*for* "habitudes" *read* habit.
13,	27	*for* "this" *read* it.
13,	29	*Comma between* "contests" *and* "immediately."
14,	19	*for* "themselves" *read* their number.
25,	29	*for* "matter" *read* Matter.
25,	30	*for* "matter" *read* Matter.
32, *Note 2*,	2	*for* "its positions" *read* what it attempts to prove.
37,	31	*for* "who is yet" *read* though he is.
57,	4	*for* "point out casually" *read* point out not casually.
72,	6	*for* "the" *read* whose.
92,	20	*for* "fancies" *read* minds.
92,	20, 21	*for* "an actual" *read* a true.
92,	22	*for* "reason" *read* conscious existence.
92,	23	*for* "person" *read* individual.
109,	35	*for* "submits to" *read* keeps within.
121, *Note 4*,	1	*for* "Hecuba, in the tragedy which bears her name (1169)" *read* In the Hecuba (356) Polyxena.
128,	9	*for* "diminish" *read* belittle.
129,	12	*for* "but he" *read* but which he.
229,	16	*for* "tragedies are extant of each poet" *read* tragedies of each poet are extant.
234,	9	*for* "fatal" *read* fated.
270,	32	*for* "god" *read* goddess.
272,	23	*for* "habitude" *read* habit.
284,	24	*for* "made arbitrarily" *read* arbitrarily made.
334,	10	*for* "glimpse" *read* can hear.
354,	4	*for* "expressiveness" *read* expression.

EURIPIDES

INTRODUCTION

LIFE, CHARACTER, INFLUENCE

OF the three great tragic poets of Greece, Euripides best reveals his personality to us in his plays. Most of the dramas which he wrote are marked with the impress of his own sentiments and ideas. He does not always efface himself, like Aeschylus and Sophocles, in the person of the heroes whom he brings upon the stage, but more than once puts himself in their place and speaks behind their mask. When we approach a poet of this kind, we are not prompted merely by idle curiosity to seek such knowledge as we can gain of his origin, of his education and of the events of his life. A biography of Euripides, though the task is not new, is the necessary preface to such a study as we are now about to undertake.[1] But such a biography, it is almost needless to say, cannot be composed with accuracy. The Greeks, in speaking of their great men, mingled legend with truth without scruple and sometimes without stint. Euripides lived in the fifth century, in the full light of history, but the accounts that concern him contain, together with established facts, a share of legend, and this must be sifted out.

A wide-spread and very alluring tradition prevailed in antiquity in regard to the birth of Euripides; according to this our poet was born in the year 480, in the island of Salamis, on the very day of the great battle.[2] This coincidence is sufficiently striking to put us on our guard. The Greek critics had a way of connecting the names of their great tragic poets with the victory at

[1] See the account of H. Weil in the Introduction to his edition of *Sept Tragédies d'Euripide;* the dissertation of Nauck, *De Euripidis vita, poesi, ingenio,* at the beginning of his edition in the Teubner collection; the very extended and complete study by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff which constitutes the first chapter of his *Euripides Herakles* (Berlin, 1889). Paley's Preface on the same subject is rather confused.

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 717. *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* vol. iv, p. 163. Suidas, *s. v.* "Euripides." *Anonymous Life* (Γένος Εὐριπίδου), at the begining of the first volume of the scholia in E. Schwartz's edition.—Diogenes Laertius (ii, 45) indicates the year only, without stating the day. Euripides is called the "Salaminian" in *Corp. Inscr. Graec.* 6052.

Salamis by means of a synchronism which was rather too ingenious. Sophocles, a boy of fifteen, dancing, lyre in hand, round the trophies of the battle in which Aeschylus had been a hero, and near the cradle of Euripides, who had just been born — this was a situation to delight the young Greeks in their schools. But does this pleasant picture satisfy the demands of chronology?[1] The date 480, which has the authority of Eratosthenes,[2] is contradicted by other testimony, especially by the inscription on the Parian Marble,[3] which places the birth of Euripides several years earlier, in the archonship of Philocrates in 485–484. But this date, although it has been adopted by several critics, does not appear to us to be more trustworthy than the former.[4] Let us therefore be content to say that Euripides was born at the time of the Persian wars, on a date which cannot be exactly determined, but which is no doubt not far removed from the year of the Battle of Salamis.

Euripides was the son of Mnesarchus or Mnesarchides,[5] of the Attic deme of Phlya;[6] his mother's name was Clito. What was their station in life? Mnesarchus, they say, was a retail dealer (κάπηλος); Clito a huckster of vegetables.[7] We might be tempted

[1] See, in the *Acta Societatis philologicae Lipsiensis*, 1872, p. 161, the dissertation by L. Mendelssohn, *De mortis anno Sophoclis et Euripidis*. His conclusions have been summarized by Ritschl for the convenience of the reader on pp. 194–196.

[2] *Anonymous Life*, p. 3, ll. 3, 4, Schwartz.

[3] See 65, 50. Cf. 75, 60 and 77, 63. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*op. cit.* p. 4) justly calls attention to the fact that in this wise Euripides would have been born under an archon Callias, would have produced his first plays under a second Callias, and would have died under a third Callias.

[4] If Euripides was born in 485, he must have died at the age of seventy-nine, since the date of his death (406) is considered as certain. Now this agrees neither with the testimony of Eratosthenes, who says that he died in his seventy-fifth year, nor with that of Philochorus (*Life*, loc. cit.), who says merely that he was more than seventy years old. If Philochorus does not fix the exact age of Euripides at the time of his death, it is because he did not know exactly the date of his birth. We had better not affect to know that of which this critic was ignorant.

[5] The two forms are given by Suidas. The second only is found in Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 64, p. 594; Euseb. *Praep. Ev.* v, 33; *Corp. Inscr. Graec.* 6051 and 6052.

[6] According to Suidas, the parents of Euripides, banished from their country, had emigrated to Boeotia and had subsequently established themselves in Attica. Nicolaus Damascenus (Stob. *Flor.* 44, 11) says that Euripides' father was a Boeotian. These are very improbable traditions. The contemporary comedians would not have failed to allude to this origin of the parents of the poet.

[7] Aristoph. *Acharn.* 478; *Knights*, 19; *Thesmoph.* 387, 456; *Frogs*, 840, and schol. 947. Aul. Gell. *Noct. Att.* xv, 20, 1. All these passages refer to the mother of Euripides. There is no mention of the father and his trade, except in the *Life*.

to search the plays of Euripides for possible signs of this humble origin. But this tradition comes from the comic poets, particularly from Aristophanes, who lets no chance go by to taunt Euripides with his mother's "chervil." Now the poets of ancient comedy must not be mistaken for historians. Philochorus, a serious, learned and accurate writer, who used documents which are now lost, maintains that the pleasantries of the comedians about the parents of Euripides were malicious inventions, and that in reality the poet's mother came of a good family.[1] Notwithstanding the length of time which separates the period when this critic lived from that of Euripides, we are more disposed to believe Philochorus, who is disinterested, than Aristophanes, who is not. Other testimony, though it has not the value of actual proof, constitutes at least a presumption favorable to the assertion of the Alexandrine critic. Euripides is cited, with Peisistratus, Euclid and Aristotle, as among those of the Greeks who owned the largest libraries.[2] As a considerable collection of books could not be made without very great expense, Euripides must have belonged to a family in comfortable circumstances. The suit in *antidosis* which was brought against him by a certain Hygiaenon[3] shows that he was counted among the rich citizens of Athens: it follows that this wealth, since he could not have derived it from the fairly unremunerative profession of tragic poet, came to him from his parents. From other sources we know that when a boy he discharged certain religious duties: he was *pyrphoros* of Apollo Zosterios;[4] he played the rôle of cup-bearer in the festivals, accompanied by sacred dances, which were celebrated in Athens round the temple of Delian Apollo.[5] Such functions were incompatible with an ignoble birth. The parents of Euripides were therefore not of such humble station as Aristophanes would have us believe. But we must also recognize that the comic writer's pleasantries on this subject would

[1] See Suidas, *s. v.* "Euripides." Philochorus wrote, besides a treatise *On the Tragedies*, a special study entitled *περὶ Εὐριπίδου*.

[2] Athen. i, p. 3 a. Cf. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 1409.

[3] Arist. *Rhet.* iii, 13.

[4] *Life*, p. 2, l. 4, Schwartz.

[5] Theophr. and Hieron. Rhod. (Athen. x, p. 424 e). The testimony of Theophrastus has great value, because it is derived from the archives of the sanctuary of Apollo at Phlya.

have had no point whatever if they had been without ground, or at least without pretext. We are therefore obliged to conjecture that the poet's mother in her youth followed some humble trade, which she subsequently abandoned, owing to a fortunate marriage.[1]

The education of young Euripides was very thorough. His parents had him study painting, and he devoted himself to it with enough success to be counted among talented artists. Several of his paintings were preserved, and were shown at Megara.[2] Dramatic art was soon to occupy him entirely; but in passing from painting to poetry he took with him into his new profession some of the habitudes of the old. The descriptive touches, the picturesque details which abound in the narrative and choruses of his tragedies, recall the art which had been the delight of his youth.[3]

His taste for gymnastic exercise was less pronounced. An oracle, the saying goes, had declared to Mnesarchus that his son would sometime win laurels at the public games. Mnesarchus misinterpreted the intimation of the god: he wished to make an athlete[4] of Euripides. This prediction, invented as usual after the event, plainly does not deserve belief.[5] It is equally improbable that Euripides, as his biographers pretend, ever won in the pancratium or in boxing. He did, however, have relations with the athletes, and he knew them well, to judge from the contempt he professes for them.[6] If he had them as teachers in his youth, he cherished an unpleasant recollection of their instruction.

Other teachings, of quite a different order, left a profound impression on his mind. Just as Euripides was arriving at the age

[1] Mr. Arthur Way (*Euripides in English Verse*, vol. ii, p. ix) makes the ingenious conjecture that the produce of the country estate belonging to Euripides' parents was occasionally seen in the market at Athens; hence the pleasantry about the poet's mother.

[2] *Life*, p. 2, ll. 3, 4. Pausanias does not speak of these pictures, which had either disappeared or were no longer in existence in his day.

[3] We meet, moreover, several allusions to painting in his plays: *Hippol.* 1005; *Hec.* 807; *Ion*, 271; *Daughters of Troy*, 687; *Phoen. Maid.* 129. The attendant of Ion (*Ion*, 1141 *et seq.*) describes at length a tapestry at Delphi.

[4] Aul. Gell. xv, 20, 2, 3. *Life*, p. 1, ll. 6, 7. According to Plutarch (*Mor.* p. 496 f) Mnesarchus died before witnessing the dramatic triumphs of his son.

[5] It arose from the mention, by Aulus Gellius, of the competition at the *Theseia*, which was not established until long after the time of Euripides.

[6] See especially the fragment of the *Autolycus* (282, Nauck) quoted by Athenaeus, x, p. 413 c.

of manhood, there began in obscurity the revolution which was to transform the spirit of Athens. This city was no longer merely the rendezvous of poets and artists: it became, according to the words of Hippias, "the prytaneum of Greek wisdom;"[1] philosophers and scholars were seen hastening toward it. Euripides was still young when Zeno of Elis took up his abode in Athens.[2] That inventor of dialectics, that "universal critic," as Timon of Phlius[3] called him, brought with him great novelties. His audience were astounded to hear him maintain that the same things were at the same time one and many, like and unlike, at rest and in motion.[4] No doubt he sought out these paradoxes merely in order to show the absurdity of current views, and to build up a new metaphysics on their ruins. His methods of argumentation were nevertheless very dangerous. The boldness of his antilogies not only gave a great shock to the minds of his hearers, but it awakened among them the spirit of criticism, which thenceforward was not to slumber. About the same time Anaxagoras came from Asia to establish himself at Athens, where at first he did not dare to say all that he thought regarding the great problems, and where he always surrounded his teachings with infinite precautions.[5] The common people were suspicious of these learned men, these *meteorologists*, who discoursed about the *ether;* who professed to understand, by human knowledge, the nature of the sun and the stars, which were considered divine; and who had the audacity to explain the eclipses of the moon. Anaxagoras was obliged to remain in seclusion, and devoted himself to a few disciples only. Later we shall inquire whether Euripides should be counted among these disciples of Anaxagoras, and also what he owes to the philosophers generally. But at this point we may declare that if in his youth he did not know the sophists, it was not long before he lent an ear to the teachings of the masters who had come from Magna Graecia and from Asia;

[1] Plato, *Protag.* p. 337 d.

[2] Plutarch (*Pericles*, iv, 5) speaks of a sojourn of Zeno at Athens, during which Pericles heard his teaching. This information, which does not afford an exact date, seems, however, to refer to a period prior to the maturity of Pericles. Now Pericles was at least ten years older than Euripides.

[3] Plut. *loc. cit.*, *πάντων ἐπιλήπτωρ.*

[4] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 261 d.

[5] Plut. *Nicias*, xxiii, 3.

that of the men of his generation he was among the first to enter into the spirit of the new philosophy.

Intercourse with philosophers and the habit of lofty speculation no doubt increased the natural seriousness of his character. Euripides does not belong to the hardy race of cheerful spirits who have dominated human affairs and mastered their own afflictions; he belongs to the race of those who have taken life seriously; who have had too close a view of it to find it satisfactory, and have suffered. He was a melancholy man,[1] a contemplative man, with a passion for solitude. At Salamis he spent entire days in a retreat which he had arranged for himself, far from the crowd and its noise,—a cavern which opened only on the sea.[2] On a cameo, in the Paris Cabinet of Medallions, it is apparently Euripides that is seen by the side of a Muse who leans her right arm familiarly upon his shoulder: they are both standing before a Nymph, who is sitting on a rock at the entrance to a sacred spot. The Nymph makes a friendly gesture to the poet and to the Muse who accompanies him: she seems to invite them to enter the grotto, a divine abode, sanctuary of poetic inspiration.[3]

This recluse, who disdained active life and who was reproached for never unbending, for not knowing how to joke even at dinner,[4] had a pensive face, a grave and almost sombre expression.[5] The artists also portray him thus. The most notable busts of Euripides, that at Naples,[6] that at Mantua,[7] that in the Brunswick Museum [8] (pl. i), present with some variations features essentially alike. At first sight the head of Euripides seems to be that of a philosopher rather than that of a poet. The beard is ample and irregular.[9] The hair, sparse on the top of the head, falls far down

[1] His biographers give him these epithets: *σύννους*, *σκυθρωπός*, *στρυφνός*, etc.

[2] Philochorus, in Aulus Gellius, who had visited this cavern (xv, 20, 5). The anonymous biographer remarks that Euripides borrows many of his comparisons from the spectacle of the sea.

[3] Welcker, *Alte Denkmäler*, vol. i, p. 488, pl. vii.

[4] Alexander the Aetolian, in Aulus Gellius, xv, 20, 8.

[5] *Life*, p. 5, ll. 2, 3, Schwartz.

[6] Visconti, *Iconogr.* vol. i, pl. v, 3. Gerhard, *Neapels ant. Bildwerke*, p. 103, no. 354.

[7] Visconti, *op. cit.* vol. i, pl. v, 1, 2.

[8] *Arch. Zeitung*, vol. xxviii (1871), pl. xxvi and p. 2.

[9] *Life*, p. 2, ll. 10, 11. The biographer adds the detail that the poet had freckles on his face.

on the sides and makes a noble frame for the face. The inclination of the head, bending slightly forward, the profound steadiness of gaze, the seams that furrow the brow, denote power of reflection and intense meditation. The mouth expresses both gentleness and goodness: an air of great frankness and of supreme honesty is diffused over the entire face. But that which dominates the whole is an expression of fatigue and dejection, an undertone of grave sadness.[1]

Are philosophy and natural disposition responsible for this state of mind in the poet? If we may credit tradition, other causes coöperated in darkening the soul of Euripides. The story was current that the poet had in his house a young servant,[2] named Cephisophon. He discovered in him so much promise of ability that he had him brought up and educated; subsequently he took him as collaborator. Cephisophon was supposed to have worked, with a certain Timocrates of Argos, on the lyric parts of Euripides' tragedies.[3] But Cephisophon repaid all these favors by the basest ingratitude: he seduced the wife of his master. One day the latter had flagrant proof of his misfortune. In a situation where the strongest souls are no longer masters of themselves, the poet displayed most astonishing calmness. "At first," say the biographers, "he tried to deter Cephisophon from committing the fault; then, as he did not succeed in persuading him, he gave up his wife to the man who desired her."[4] No less astonishing than this rather too philosophic way of resigning himself to the most cruel of misfortunes is the haste with which Euripides seeks to renew an ex-

[1] A catalogue of the portraits of Euripides is given by Welcker in his *Alte Denkmäler*, vol. i, p. 485 *et seq.* Perhaps the most expressive of these portraits is that which is seen on the fragment of a vase whose provenance is Athens (vol. i, p. 490, pl. vii). Regarding the double hermes of Euripides and Sophocles, see, besides Welcker, vol. i, p. 457, Friederichs, *Bausteine* (1885), p. 478. —The statuette in the Louvre (Clarac, pl. ccxciv), on the base of which are inscribed the titles of a large number of the tragedies of Euripides, does not afford useful iconographic information, as the head was restored in imitation of the hermes in the Naples Museum.

[2] The scholiasts call him a "slave," relying on verse 401 of the *Acharnians*, where, however, it is not sure that the poet refers to him. His name indicates that he was born free.

[3] Aristoph. fragm. 580, quoted in the *Life*, p. 6, Schwartz. Cf. p. 2, l. 2, where reference is made to Timocrates. Nauck (*De Eurip. vita*, xvii, n. 21) accepts Bergk's conjecture that this Timocrates was no other than the Democrates under whose name Euripides had his *Andromache* performed outside of Athens.

[4] *Life*, p. 6.

periment which resulted so fatally. Disembarrassed of one wife, he marries another. Melito—this was the name of the first—is succeeded by Choerile. But the poet has bad luck. He gets rid of an adulteress only to tie himself to another woman of loose morals. From this time he takes his revenge on the whole sex for the wrong he has suffered in his two marriages; this is the reason why in his tragedies he constantly disparages women.[1]

Here, it would seem, we are in the midst of legends. In the first place we suspect that Choerile never existed. This woman's name,[2] which occurs nowhere else, has in Greek a very obscene meaning. It must be a surname, a vulgar sobriquet given to Euripides' wife by the comedians. Subsequently, the grammarians, meeting the two names Melito and Choerile applied in turn to the same person, inferred that the poet had been married twice. The tradition of these two marriages was so untrustworthy that it was not known whether Choerile had replaced Melito, or Melito had followed Choerile. We may therefore consider it tolerably certain that the poet had but one wife, Melito, the daughter of Mnesilochus, whom we know to have been the father-in-law of Euripides.

Was Melito guilty of the immorality with which the comic poets charge her? This is not an idle question, because the conduct of this woman necessarily had an influence on the disposition of the poet. In a case like this it is quite as difficult to deny as to affirm. But here again chronological considerations warn us against trusting the traditional account. We meet the first allusions to the misfortunes of Euripides in the *Frogs*.[3] Now this play was performed in the archonship of Callias, in January, 405. Euripides had been dead several months. Why did not this accusation lodged against the honor of Melito appear during the lifetime of the poet? To urge considerations of delicacy and of high decorum would be vain; they would not have curbed a man like

[1] *Life*, p. 2, ll. 11, 12; p. 5, l. 5. The biographer also alleges that it was under the influence of recent misfortunes that Euripides composed his first *Hippolytus*, in which Phaedra played the part of an impure woman.

[2] Another form of the word in Suidas (*s. v.* Εὐριπίδης) is Χοιρίνη. Cf. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea*, p. 149, note.

[3] The only express passage is verse 1048: ἃ γὰρ ἐς τὰς ἀλλοτρίας ἑποίεις, αὐτὸς τούτοισιν ἐπλήγης. In verse 1408, Cephisophon is simply considered as forming a part of the household of Euripides, along with his wife, children and library.

Aristophanes. How did this slander, unless it was pure calumny, crop up so late? In a comedy which antedates the *Frogs* by six years, the *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides plays a ridiculous part, and at the same time there is frequent reference to the conjugal infidelity of women. What a fine chance for Aristophanes to make the public laugh at the expense of Euripides by associating the name of Cephisophon with that of Melito! But he did nothing of the kind; the play does not contain the most distant allusion to the wife of the poet. The tradition whose trustworthiness we are trying to determine was therefore not in existence in 411; it grew up between that date and the year 406; that is, in the last years of the poet's life, at a time perhaps when he had already left Athens never to return. Is not the immorality of Melito simply a malicious invention intended to account for the views which Euripides expresses about women?[1]

In some beautiful verses of the *Suppliants*, Euripides has one of his characters say:

> "The poet's self in gladness should bring forth
> His offspring, song; if he attain not this,
> He cannot from a heart distraught with pain
> Gladden his fellows: reason sayeth nay."[2]

It seems that in the course of his life he must more than once have experienced this feeling. His successes on the stage were in accord neither with his hopes nor with the greatness of his genius. From the time when he obtained his first chorus from the archon Callias, during a career of nearly fifty years, he won the first prize in fact but four times. Of eighty-eight dramas played during his lifetime, seventy-two did not secure the votes of the judges. Although he always kept aloof from public life,[3] he had enemies,

[1] The hatred which Euripides is supposed to have felt for women led some writers to attribute unnatural tastes to him (Ael. *Hist. Var.* v, 2; Suidas, *s. v.* Εὐριπίδης). To make amends, other recounters of anecdotes professed that he hated women in his tragedies only (Hieron. Rhod. ap. Athen. xiii, p. 557 e; cf. pp. 603 e and 604 f).

[2] Verses 180–183. These are suspected by Nauck, but are authentic in the opinion of Kirchhoff and von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (edition of the *Suppliants* in his *Analecta*); both these scholars think that there is a lacuna before verse 180.

[3] Aristophanes reproaches Euripides, as he does Socrates, with leading a lazy life, διατριβὴν ἀργόν (*Clouds*, 316; *Frogs*, 1498). But Aristotle (*Rhet.* ii, 6, p. 1384 b)

whom the rather disdainful reserve of his character and the boldness of his views had made for him. Embittered by them, maltreated and derided by the comic poets, Euripides desired to escape from the attacks which were renewed relentlessly and which disturbed his life, now nearing its end. Athens, rent by party strife, menaced with ruin, was no longer the city that he had known in his youth. Toward the end of the year 408, shortly after the performance of his *Orestes*,[1] he decided to depart. He probably left his three sons there: Mnesarchides, who devoted himself to business; Mnesilochus, who was an actor; and the son who was known as Euripides the Younger, himself a poet, who after his father's death had his posthumous dramas performed.[2]

On leaving his country,[3] Euripides was to find in foreign lands the satisfaction which Athens had often denied him. In Magnesia, whither he first betook himself, he was treated as a public guest and was loaded with honors.[4] From Magnesia he went to Macedonia, whither Archelaus called him. This enlightened prince had not limited himself to opening roads through the barbarous regions of his kingdom and to embellishing its cities with magnificent monuments; in order to attract poets as well as artists, he had established, at Dium, periodic contests of dramatic poets on the stage.[5] At Pella Euripides not only gained the admiration and friendship of a prince,[6] but also found the rest that he so much desired. At the court of the king of Macedonia he wrote or finished several of his tragedies, among others the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and the

speaks of an ἀπόκρισις of Euripides to the Syracusans. The scholiast (ii, 230, Spengel) believes that this refers to an embassy, and quotes the words of Euripides. Perhaps, as Ruhnken once conjectured, we should read the name of Hyperides, instead of Euripides, in Aristotle's text.

[1] This tragedy belonged to the last tetralogy that Euripides put on the stage at Athens.

[2] *Life*, p. 2, ll. 12–14, Schwartz; and Suidas, who speaks of another Euripides, supposed to be a nephew of the great poet.

[3] We do not know at what time in the poet's life to place the voyage he made to the island of Icaros, where he wrote the verses, which have been preserved, on the death of a woman who had been poisoned with her children by mushrooms (Athen. ii, p. 61 b). The voyage which Diogenes Laertius (iii, 6) has him take to Egypt, "in company with Plato," is pure fancy.

[4] *Life*, p. 2, l. 7.

[5] Thucyd. ii, 100. Diod. xvii, 16, 3.

[6] Plut. *Mor.* pp. 177 a, 384 d, 531 e, 1095 d. Lucian, *Paras.* 35.

Bacchanals, and a drama which from gratitude to his royal host he called *Archelaus*.[1] The last days of his life were rendered pleasant by the esteem and consideration of all, by the universal respect shown him, and by the loyal friendship of the poet Agathon.[2]

He died in 406,[3] at the age of about seventy-five years.[4] But legend gathered about the death of Euripides, as it had gathered about his life. A poet who had so engaged public attention, who had roused so much hatred, could not meet with an ordinary death. The biographers relate with great detail that Euripides was one day walking in solitary meditation through a forest, near the city of Pella, when the hounds of Archelaus, who was hunting, passed by. The king's pack became strangely enraged at sight of Euripides, and seemed to think they had come upon a wild animal; they rushed upon the poet and devoured him.[5] Such an accident is of course not impossible; but has it not happened in every age and in every land that men who during their lives were reputed ungodly have come to a bad end? The kind of death which Euripides met is like that of the mythical Actaeon, whose shameless eye had dared to gaze upon the goddess Artemis in her bath. This account is therefore probably a fable,[6] whose origin is accounted for by the ill will of the conservative party at Athens, and by the resentment of all those whom Euripides had shocked

[1] This title recalled the memory of the founder of the Macedonian dynasty.

[2] Regarding Agathon's sojourn at the court of Archelaus, see Aristoph. *Frogs*, 83, and the schol. 85; Plato, *Symposium*, p. 172 c. — In Plutarch (*Mor.* p. 177 a and p. 770 c) and Aelian (*Hist. Var.* ii, 21; xiii, 4) are found the echoes of a statement that Euripides was one of the lovers of the beautiful Agathon. It is said that he wrote his *Chrysippus* for him. This statement must have its origin in the misogyny of Euripides, coupled with the friendship which united the two poets. Aristoph. *Thesmoph.* 88 *et seq.*

[3] Apollodorus (Diod. xiii, 103, 5; cf. 104, 1) makes Ol. 93, 3 the year of his death. The *Parian Marble* gives Ol. 93, 2 as the date. As the Attic year began in July, these two sources may both refer to the summer of the year 406, as H. Weil remarks (Introduction, xviii, note 2). Cf. schol. Aristoph. *Thesmoph.* 190. — The date given by Plutarch (*Symposium*, viii, p. 717 c) is erroneous, arising from the wrong interpretation of a passage in Timaeus of Sicily.

[4] Eratosthenes (*Anonymous Life*, p. 3, ll. 3, 4) gives his age as exactly seventy-five years. But we have seen that the date of Euripides' birth is not certain.

[5] *Life*, p. 4, ll. 12–22. Diod. xiii, 103, 5, etc.

[6] It is worth noting that Aristophanes, in his *Frogs*, makes no allusion whatever to the manner of Euripides' death. We may therefore believe that his death was in no way extraordinary.

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by his lack of reverence for the gods. Another version of the same story seeks to account for the rage of Archelaus' hounds. Two poets, whose names are given, Arridaeus the Macedonian and Crateuas the Thessalian, jealous of the credit which Euripides enjoyed, plotted for his destruction. By paying ten minae, they secured one of Archelaus' slaves as an accomplice; this slave likewise has a name: he is called Lysimachus. He was the man who unleashed the king's dogs and set them upon Euripides. The biographers, by the way, do not agree about this episode. There are those who relate in all seriousness that the poet was torn to pieces, like Orpheus, not by dogs, but by women.[1] The specific mention of proper names in this account—the ancient biographers are never chary of them—cannot deceive us as to the merits of the tradition. Is it not clear that it grew out of the verse of Aristophanes in which Euripides is told that the women are going to take advantage of the feast of the Thesmophoria to kill him and thus to avenge their wrongs?[2] Was it not right that a poet who had so often disparaged the female sex should be slain by women? Let us, then, confess with resignation that we are ignorant how Euripides died,[3] —a fact that is hardly essential to a proper understanding of his works.

When the news of his death reached Athens, there was public mourning. The aged Sophocles, they say, clothed himself in black garments; at the rehearsals of the plays, the actors and the chorus appeared without wreaths.[4] The Athenian people sincerely mourned their poet, whose fame had been enhanced by his exile. The effect produced by his death was not less impressive abroad, where Euripides was so generally admired.[5] Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily, paid a very high price for the lyre, the tablets and the stylus of the poet, so that he might deposit them in the temple of the Muses.[6] In Macedonia Euripides had a magnificent tomb, which for a long time people went to see, near Amphipolis, in the valley of Are-

[1] *Life*, p. 5, ll. 11, 12. Suidas, *s. v.* Εὐριπίδης. [2] *Thesmoph.* 181, 182.

[3] Pausanias (i, 2, 2) speaks of these accounts of the death of Euripides rather sceptically.

[4] *Life*, p. 3, ll. 11–13.

[5] Hermippus (*Life*, p. 5, l. 18) calls him ξενοφιλώτατος.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 5, ll. 14–17.

thusa.[1] At Athens he had merely a cenotaph,[2] on the road to the Piraeus; but an inscription, attributed to Thucydides or to the lyric poet Timotheus, recalled that if the earth of Macedonia held the bones of Euripides, "all Greece was his tomb."[3] The gods, who ought to have borne resentment against the poet, gave him after his death a striking evidence of their favor: Zeus struck the two monuments which had been raised to his memory by lightning. This was an honor, said the friends of Euripides, which only Lycurgus had received before him.[4]

In the *Frogs* Aristophanes has the shade of Aeschylus say: "My poetry has survived me; that of Euripides died with him."[5] Never was judgment of critic more unjust or less prophetic than this. Like all innovators, Euripides had enemies; he provoked energetic opposition and violent antipathies. But hardly is he dead, when hatred subsides, opposition ceases, and he becomes everybody's favorite poet. In the very year after his death, those of his plays which his son presents in competition receive the first prize.[6] His triumph, which begins here, is to grow through the centuries. If—to adopt the fancy of Aristophanes—Aeschylus had returned from Hades a hundred years after the performance of the *Frogs*, he would have seen that his own poetry, to be sure, was not forgotten on earth, but that it was eclipsed by that of Euripides. Sophocles himself, had he returned to this world, would have had great cause for astonishment. His tragedies, perfect as they were, were no longer performed most frequently and with the greatest success. He was not the most read, the oftenest quoted, the most admired of the tragic poets: this was Euripides. The poet who found it so difficult during his lifetime to please the judges of the dramatic contests immediately after his death advances to the

[1] Vitruv. viii, 3. Amm. Marc. xxvii, 4, 8: "Arethusa convallis et statio, in qua *visitur Euripidis sepulcrum*." Pliny (*Hist. Nat.* xxxi, 19) relates that near the poet's tomb two rivers mingle their streams: "the water of one of these rivers is very healthy to drink; the other is fatal." Is this an allusion to the nature of Euripides' poetry?

[2] Pausan. i, 2, 2. *Life*, p. 3, l. 4.

[3] *Life*, p. 3, ll. 5–8. An epigram by Ion of Ephesus in honor of Euripides has also been preserved (Bergk, *Lyr. Gr.* vol. ii, p. 254).

[4] Plut. *Lycurgus*, xxxi, 4.

[5] Aristoph. *Frogs*, 868, 869.

[6] Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 67. Suidas, *s. v.* Εὐριπίδης, fin. The young generation which had supported and applauded him (*Frogs*, 1377) had grown up.

undisputed position of master of the school. The writers of tragedy who follow him all come under his influence, all seek to imitate him, conscientiously reproduce all his faults, and so little succeed in approaching his excellence that the weakness of their imitation renders only more striking the superiority of their prototype.[1]

Euripides' influence, though less direct, is also traceable in the field of art. From the beginning of the fourth century, the artists, who had previously found their inspiration in Homer and the cyclic poets, are inspired by tragedy, and they chiefly enjoy representing scenes from the dramas of Euripides. Their works, while losing the calm simplicity and the ideal nobility of earlier times, gain in expressiveness and in action, and become more dramatic. Artists and poets alike strive for a scrupulous imitation of nature, in their mutual effort to secure effect and pathos. The vase-paintings still show how popular Euripides had become, how familiar all artists — small and great alike — were with his dramas.[2]

Moreover everybody cites him as an authority. Orators often quote him on the rostrum. Philosophers of the most different schools consider him as one of themselves. Crantor finds in his works maxims which savor of the Academy; Chrysippus has no difficulty in discovering certain doctrines of the Portico. Nay, even the disciples of Diogenes claim Euripides as their patron, on the ground that Telephus, with his rags, had afforded the model of the cynic life.[3] Euripides is more than admired; he is the object of an infatuation which some people carry to the extent of mania. "If the dead preserved any consciousness, as some people believe," says one of Philemon's characters, "I would go hang myself in order to see Euripides."[4] The passionate admirer of Euripides is a person we meet with so often that in course of time he becomes a type in comedy. Two plays of the Alexandrian pe-

[1] On this point, which we merely desire to mention in passing, see the work of M. de Block, *Influence morale et littéraire d'Euripide chez les anciens*, pp. 16–18 (*Rev. de l'Instr. publ. en Belgique*, vol. xxi, p. 2).

[2] See the work of Vogel, *Scenen euripideischer Tragödien in griechischen Vasengemälden* (Leipzig, 1886). Cf. Kinkel, *Euripides und die bildende Kunst* (Berlin, 1872). This influence of Euripides on art had previously been noticed by M. Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. i, p. 147 *et seq.*

[3] For the passages relating to these facts and to others of the same kind, see Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. i, p. 135 *et seq.*

[4] *Life*, p. 6, l. 15, Schwartz. Philemon, fragm. 40 a.

riod were entitled Φλευριπίδης, "The Euripides Fanatic."[1] But the most characteristic thing of this kind is the anecdote which Lucian relates in the beginning of his treatise *On the Method of Writing History*. In the reign of Lysimachus, a company, passing through Abdera, performed the *Andromeda* of Euripides in the theatre of that town. Archelaus, the actor who had the principal part, was an artist of great talent, who knew how to convey to the public the illusion and almost the thrill of reality. It was in the height of summer. On leaving the theatre, all the spectators were taken with a fever which did not leave them for several months. This fever was accompanied by a delirium of a new kind,—the tragic delirium. The streets of the town were full of pale and haggard people, who sang or declaimed at the top of their voices the most beautiful passages of the *Andromeda*. "It needed nothing less than the coming of winter and of a heavy frost," says Lucian, "to put an end to this mania." This piquant tale, whatever part the imagination of the rhetorician may have in it, is a proof of the enthusiasm which the plays of the poet excited at that time.

This enthusiasm was to continue to the first centuries of the Christian era. The fathers of the Church sometimes quote Euripides. What they admire in him is evidently not so much his portrayal of passion, as the loftiness of the moral sayings in which his dramas abound; then too his attacks on the popular religion beguile them to the point of believing that they see in him a sort of forerunner of Christianity. In the eyes of Clement of Alexandria, Euripides, when he seems to confuse Zeus with Hades, has anticipated the relations between God the Father and God the Son.[2] The author of the drama entitled the *Passion of Christ* does not hesitate to treat this great subject by means of fragments borrowed from Euripides, and he has no scruples about letting the Virgin speak the language of Medea or Hecuba. Finally some poets have such high regard for him that they attribute to him verses of their own making,—verses which breathe the purest Christian spirit.[3]

[1] Athen. iv, p. 175 b.

[2] *Strom.* v, 688. Eurip. fragm. 912, Nauck.

[3] See the passage in Justin Martyr, *De Monarchia*, chap. 3, quoted by Nauck, *Tragic. Graec. Fragm.* p. 713, no. 1131. Cf. Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* 59; *Strom.* v, 691.

This taste for Euripides found its way from Greece to Rome. Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Pacuvius, Ennius, all these imitators or translators of the Greek drama, translated or imitated Euripides much more frequently than Sophocles. Subsequently Ovid, whose *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* are all full of reminders of our poet, wrote after his pattern a *Medea;* Varius wrote a *Thyestes.* The only Roman tragedies that are preserved intact, those attributed to Seneca, are in the main clumsy copies of the dramas of Euripides.[1] Finally the predilection of Roman men of letters has been shared by the French classic poets: Racine does not get his inspiration from Sophocles, but takes Euripides as his model.

One of the objects of our study will be to seek the causes for this universal appreciation.

[1] It is not part of our purpose to dwell on these facts, which have already been sufficiently established by M. Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. i, p. 140 *et seq.* In this work, as is well known, the analysis of the plays of Euripides is followed, when occasion offers, by comparisons with the fragments of Latin tragedy.

PART I

THE CRITICAL SPIRIT IN EURIPIDES

CHAPTER I

RELATIONS OF EURIPIDES WITH PHILOSOPHERS AND SOPHISTS

I

THE PERSONAL OPINIONS OF THE POET THE INDICATIONS BY WHICH THEY MAY BE RECOGNIZED

ONE of the secondary reasons for Euripides' success with posterity constituted a real defect in his dramas,—that critical spirit, everywhere manifest, which spares the gods no more than it spares mankind; which deals with the ancient stories of mythology as it deals with contemporary morals; which attacks accepted ideas, social conventions and all forms of tradition. This spirit, with which the scepticism or the progress of subsequent times was to accord so well, deserves to be given prominence; but it is necessary to solve a preliminary question.

Ought Euripides, who by profession is a poet and not a philosopher,—Euripides, who does not speak in his own name, but lets the characters in his dramas speak,—ought he to be held responsible for the ideas which these characters express? In fact, his contemporaries were convinced that the poet was responsible, and they sometimes carried their belief to the point of error and injustice. A verse in the *Hippolytus*, which appeared to aim a blow at the sanctity of oaths,[1] brought upon Euripides the charge of impiety.[2] In his *Danaè* an actor declaimed these verses: "O power of gold, enchantment and delight of mortals! Men love neither their mother, nor their children, nor their father so much as thee and those who possess thee. If Aphrodite has that lustre in her eyes, what wonder that she inflames all hearts with love?"[3] At these words the whole audience rose and would have driven the actor and the play from the stage. Euripides was obliged to come out and to announce that the character to whom he had allotted this speech was going to be punished.[4] The Athenian crowd had

[1] This is verse 612, whose import we shall investigate at the end of chapter ii.

[2] Arist. *Rhet.* iii, 15.

[3] Stob. *Floril.* 91, 4. Fragm. 324, Nauck.

[4] Sen. *Epistles*, 115, 15.

been stirred by a good emotion,—crowds, even when a certain number of disreputable people enter into their make-up, are often moral,—but it had been mistakenly agitated and had failed to understand the poet's meaning; for this eulogy of gold, carried to the point of hyperbole, was intended by the poet to be ironical. The language of Ixion, in the tragedy bearing that name, would have roused a still more violent storm had not the poet taken care to announce in advance [1] that the torture of the wheel was in store for Ixion in the end. But the first verse of his *Melanippe the Philosopher* roused such a tumult that at a second performance the poet had to make the *amende honorable* and replace it by another.[2] These instances prove that at the performances of tragedies the Athenian public was scandalized by any utterance which seemed opposed to religion or to public morality, and that it was disposed to hold the poet accountable for the boldness of his heroes' speeches.

We are not called upon to share these prejudices. Evidently it will not do to attribute to Euripides, without discrimination, all the views which his characters maintain, for frequently—and who can wonder at it?—these views are contradictory. But among these unavoidable contradictions, it is possible to discern [3] that which is the poet's own thought and that which is not. If, for example, an idea recurs a number of times in his dramas, and is developed with evident satisfaction and in plays belonging to different periods, should we not infer that this idea is dear to him? Another criterion is our knowledge of the character and the situation of each of the *dramatis personae*. Bellerophon may blaspheme the gods, without making Euripides more responsible for his blasphemies than was Aeschylus for the maledictions which Prometheus hurled against Zeus; for Bellerophon, like Prometheus, is godless, according to the purport of the fable itself. But if Melanippe, who is a woman and a young girl, delivers a long and learned dissertation about the origin of the world, there can be

[1] This is only a conjecture, but it is perhaps justified by the Euripidean habit of writing prologues which often announce the conclusion of the play.

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 756 c.

[3] Mahaffy (*Classical Greek Literature*, vol. i, part ii, p. 100) imagines that the actors "may have had some conventional sign for expressing the poet's thoughts, which made them clear to the audience, but which we have now irretrievably lost." This supposition belongs to the realm of fancy.

no doubt that it is not she, but Euripides, who speaks. "It is quite certain," says Bayle,[1] "that the author of a tragedy must not be thought to hold all the views that he parades before us; but there are mannerisms which show for what part he should be held accountable." It is these mannerisms, some of which were pointed out in ancient times,[2] that we shall endeavor to set forth.

II

THE PHILOSOPHERS
CRITICISM OF THE TRADITION WHICH MAKES EURIPIDES A DISCIPLE OF ANAXAGORAS
TO WHAT EXTENT HE MAY HAVE COME UNDER THE LATTER'S INFLUENCE

The critical spirit[3] in Euripides is often nothing less than the philosophical spirit, which disguises itself so little in his dramas that certain Greek critics could say of him that he was "the philosopher of the stage." How did this philosopher develop? From what sources do his ideas spring? Did he have teachers, and who were they? In antiquity, as in our own time, this investigation was carried very far. So persistent was the desire to discover the various original sources of the poet's thoughts that not infrequently, as it seems, fancy grew into probability and conjecture into certainty. Must we, for example, concede that Euripides attended the school of the "natural philosopher" Archelaus,[5] when chronology — which the Greek grammarians regarded much less than we — contravenes this?[6] Could Democritus, notwithstand-

[1] *Dict.* art. "Euripides."

[2] Lucian (*Jup. trag.* 41) cites examples of passages where Euripides speaks on his own account, καθ' ἑαυτόν, and expresses personal views. Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Rhet.* viii, 10) distinguishes in the *Melanippe* passages which are the language of the poet from those of the young girl. The scholiasts at various times make observations of the same kind.

[3] On the subject dealt with in this and the following chapters, see Verrall, *Euripides the Rationalist.*

[4] Athen. xiii, p. 561 a. Vitruv. viii, 1. Sext. Emp. *Adv. Gramm.* 288, etc.

[5] *Life*, p. 3, l. 17, Schwartz.

[6] According to Zeller (*Philos. der Griechen*, vol. i, p. 1031), Archelaus appears to have been the disciple of Anaxagoras. He was therefore not the teacher of Euripides, who at the most may have been his companion.

ing certain apparent evidence,[1] have had a share in guiding the mind of Euripides, who was his senior by twenty years? If Heraclitus bewailed the miseries of human life, before Euripides,—if before him, Xenophanes disparaged the athletes and exalted culture of the intellect to the detriment of physical strength,[2] must we conclude from these coincidences, in the absence of all other proof, that the philosophy of Heraclitus[3] and that of Xenophanes left their imprint on the poet's mind?

The effect which the teachings of Anaxagoras had upon him seems at first sight to be less open to question. Tradition, unvarying on this point, but dating no further back than the Alexandrine period,[4] does not, it must be admitted, here run foul of chronology. If it be true that Anaxagoras spent thirty years of his life at Athens,[5] he must have arrived there about the year 460,[6] since he left that city at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. In 460 Euripides was about twenty years old, and therefore those relations of teacher and pupil, which several ancient writers after Alexander the Aetolian have mentioned, may have grown up between him and the philosopher.[7]

We are told that these two men had a certain affinity of temperament and of character, which in course of time united them more closely in their common thoughts and studies. Both were serious and of a sad disposition.[8] Aristotle, however, has observed that in Greece men who were eminent in philosophy, politics, poe-

[1] Fragm. 1047 (Nauck) of Euripides has been thought to resemble words attributed to Democritus by Stobaeus (*Flor.* 40, 9).

[2] See the fragment of the *Autolycus* about athletes, analogous — so says Athenaeus (x, p. 413 f), to whom we owe both these passages — to fragment 2 of Xenophanes.

[3] The similarity between the famous saying of Euripides: "Who knows whether that which we call life be not death and whether death be not life?" and the fragment (60) of Heraclitus: "Our life is the death of the gods and our death their life," is too isolated to be truly conclusive.

[4] It is met for the first time in Alexander the Aetolian (Aul. Gell. xv, 20, 8), one of the poets of the tragic Pleiad, a contemporary of Ptolemy II.

[5] Diog. Laert. ii, 3, 7, Cobet.

[6] E. Zeller (*Philos. der Griechen*, vol. i, p. 968) has refuted, in a long note and by reasons which taken together are convincing, the view which places the birth of Anaxagoras in about 534, and his death in 462.

[7] Cic. *Tusc.* iii, 14. Vitruv. *Praef.* viii, 1. *Life*, p. 1, l. 10 and p. 3, l. 17. Suidas, *s. v.* Εὐριπίδης, etc.

[8] Alex. Aetol. *loc. cit.* Ael. *Hist. Var.* viii, 13.

try or the arts were melancholy men.[1] We have no evidence that Euripides owed his melancholy to Anaxagoras rather than to his own nature. It is also claimed that the fondness and admiration which the philosopher roused in his disciple left their traces in the poet's plays,—traces in the discovery of which much ingenuity has been displayed. Euripides once praised the happiness of the sage, the man wholly devoted to the pursuit of knowledge,

> "Who plots no hurt to any brother-man,
> Who, from all actions of injustice fleeing,
> Fixes his eyes on ageless Nature, seeing
> Order immortal, learns wherein her being
> Consists, how, when existence began,
> And, by such thoughts uplifted, dwells where came
> Never temptation to deeds of shame."[2]

An allusion to Anaxagoras and to his theory of the formation of the world is not impossible, but it is not evident. It is rather more likely that Euripides, thinking of the anxious times in which he lived and looking into his own heart, wished to contrast the contemplative life of the student with the active life of the statesman: the serenity and the virtues of the one with the excitements and moral distress of the other. Similarly when he says:

> "A wise man, though in earth's remotest parts
> He dwell, though ne'er I see him—count I my friend,"[3]

he means to speak of the ideal wise man; what he desires to express is the general idea of the preëminence of knowledge and of the fondness which he has for it. And finally must we see an allusion to Anaxagoras in the words of Melanippe, who, before explaining the origin of things, says:

> "Not mine the tale but from my mother heard."[4]

The mother of Melanippe is in point of fact the daughter of the

[1] *Probl.* xxx, 1. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* i, 33.

[2] Fragm. 910 (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv, 634; Themist. p. 307 d). This praise of the sage has been compared to the picture which Socrates draws of the philosopher in the *Theaetetus*, p. 173 d.

[3] Fragm. 902, in which Nauck now adopts the reading τὸν ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρα instead of σοφὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα. The sage mentioned in another fragment (964, Nauck, Plut. *Consol. ad Apollon.* p. 112 d) is not necessarily Anaxagoras.

[4] Fragm. 484.

Centaur Chiron, a philosopher of legendary times, whose wisdom was proverbial among the Greeks. When Melanippe informs the audience that she is about to quote her mother, or in other words her grandfather, the poet takes the precaution—as ingenious as it is insufficient—to make apologies for the long philosophical tirade which he has the young girl make. There is no serious reason for thinking that the word "mother" is merely a figure of speech, meant to recall the memory of a tenderly beloved master.[1]

Surer proofs of close relations between Euripides and Anaxagoras are supposed to be found elsewhere. The leader of the chorus in the tragedy *Alcestis* seeks to console Admetus for the loss of his spouse by telling him that in his own family he has seen a young man, an only son, snatched by death from his aged father, who, however, bore this misfortune bravely.[2] This father, so brave in his grief, is thought to be none other than Anaxagoras, who at the news of his son's death is reported to have made this heroic reply: "I knew that I had begotten a mortal being."[3] But did Anaxagoras really make this remark? We may doubt it, because an analogous answer is attributed before him to Solon, and after him to Xenophon.[4] Should not this stoic utterance be classed among those famous sayings, among those apothegms, which through being circulated for a long time had become anonymous, although the Greek compilers professed to know their origin? There is no evidence that Anaxagoras deserves the credit of it. To make amends, we willingly admit that another passage in Euripides may recall the philosopher. This is where the poet, with Medea as his mouthpiece, insists on the dangers that knowledge has for its devotees:

> "Ne'er should the man whose heart is sound of wit
> Let teach his sons more wisdom than the herd.
> They are burdened with unprofitable lore,
> And spite and envy of other folk they earn.

[1] This interpretation dates back to Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Rhet.* viii, 10). If it is correct, how can we explain that Euripides has Melanippe expound a doctrine which, as we shall see hereafter, is different from that of Anaxagoras?

[2] *Alcestis*, 903 *et seq.*

[3] Chrysipp. ap. Galen. *De Plat. et Hippocr. Dogm.* iv, 7. Cic. *Tusc.* iii, 14, 30.

[4] Plut. *Mor.* p. 119 a. Diog. Laert. ii, 3, 13.

> For, if thou bring strange wisdom unto dullards,
> Useless shalt thou be counted, and not wise:
> And, grant thy name o'ertop the self-extolled
> Wits, in the city odious shalt thou be."[1]

Nothing hinders our recognizing Anaxagoras in this "odious" philosopher, who at the time when the *Medea* was performed, in 431, had just been forced into exile, or at least was already under the ban of the accusations which brought about his exile.[2]

This reference, if it is correct, gives evidence of certain friendly relations between Anaxagoras and Euripides, but it does not prove that the philosophy of Euripides was that of Anaxagoras. It is in the poet's plays themselves that we must study this question, which is not a new one, but was discussed long ago and at great length by Valckenaer.[3] But we may take it up briefly and apply a more rigorous criticism, at the same time profiting by the progress made since the days of the Dutch scholar in the interpretation of the Euripidean text.

In a fragment of a lost tragedy the idea is expressed that too great contempt cannot be felt for the men who busy themselves with celestial phenomena, for those *meteorologists*

> "Whose pestilent tongue flings random lies abroad"[4]

regarding the mysteries of nature. Although the word μετεωρολόγος appears for the first time in Plato, there is no reason to suspect the attribution of these verses to Euripides, which was made by Clement of Alexandria, who has preserved them for us; but if we were to take the passage literally, what a condemnation it would be of Anaxagoras, and of Euripides himself! In vain does Valckenaer claim that this attack is directed exclusively against the ancient Ionians, who traced the origin of things to matter only, whereas Anaxagoras broke away from matter and gave Intelligence a

[1] *Medea*, 294–301.

[2] It is impossible to fix the exact time at which Anaxagoras had to leave Athens. Diodorus (xii, 39, 2) places the charges of impiety which were directed against him — charges in which Pericles was implicated — before the beginning of the Peloponnesian War.

[3] *Diatribe in Eurip. perdit. dram. reliq.* cap. iv, v (*In Euripidis Anaxagorea quaedam*, p. 25, 44). The *Diatribe* is found at the end of the edition of the *Hippolytus*.

[4] Fragm. 913 (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* v, 732).

higher place.[1] Such a distinction would appear to have been beyond the grasp of the Athenian people. If Euripides wished to make an allusion, it is plain that this allusion must have been to the learned men of his own day and not to those of the preceding age. Is it not simpler to say that the ideas met with in Euripides cannot all be regarded as the expression of his own thought? The verses whose purport we have just given are lyrical, and may have been uttered by the chorus. Now the chorus in Euripides, as in the other writers of tragedy, often expresses the commonplaces of popular wisdom and the opinion of the masses. As the masses at that time were suspicious of those devoted to the study of celestial phenomena, it is not surprising that the poet should have made the chorus express this view. It is nevertheless true that Euripides himself must be ranked as one of this suspected clan of meteorologists; for he had opinions about the world and about nature which he has more than once expressed in his dramas. Do these opinions agree with what we know of the doctrines of Anaxagoras?

Some ancient writers state that the poet and the philosopher had the same explanation for the overflowing of the Nile; they both found its cause in the melting of the snows of Ethiopia.[2] But this explanation is older than Anaxagoras himself, for Aeschylus had already expressed it.[3] This coincidence is therefore without value. Others are of greater importance. It is certain that Anaxagoras had settled ideas about the nature of the celestial bodies. He taught at Athens, although unhappily for himself, that the sun was an enormous incandescent rock, λίθος διάπυρος.[4] Now this same doctrine is supposed to be recognized in a passage of the *Orestes* of Euripides: this is the monody in which Electra declares that she would wish to have Tantalus, the father of her race, hear her wail-

[1] *Diatribe*, p. 27.

[2] Diod. i, 38, 4. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. iv, 269. Cf. Eurip. *Hel.* 1–3 and a fragment of the *Archelaus* (228, Nauck).

[3] Aeschyl. fragm. 300, Nauck (139, Ahrens). It seems unlikely that Aeschylus, who was the senior of Anaxagoras by thirty years, and retired to Sicily a short time after the probable date of the latter's arrival at Athens, should have got this opinion from him. Herodotus (ii, 22), in refuting this explanation, does not say that Anaxagoras was its author.

[4] Xen. *Mem.* iv, 7, 7. Plato, *Apol.* p. 26 d. Cf. Schaubach, *Anax. Fragm.* p. 139.

ing and her cry of pain, that she would like to fly to him, that is—

> "to the rock 'twixt heaven
> And earth suspended in circles swinging,
> Upborne by the golden chains scarce-clinging,
> The shard from Olympus riven."[1]

Here the reference to the legendary torture of Tantalus is obvious; not to that which is described in the eleventh book of the *Odyssey* and takes place in Hades, but to that to which Pindar alludes, the scene of which is betwixt heaven and earth. Here the great criminal, chastised by the gods, is carried up into the air and has an enormous rock over his head, by which he is constantly dreading to be crushed. This simple explanation has, however, satisfied neither the scholiast of Pindar, nor the scholiast of Euripides, nor some modern critics who have lent too willing an ear to the scholiasts. Starting out with this traditional idea that Euripides was the disciple of Anaxagoras, the commentators have without further warrant credited the poet with a naturalistic interpretation of the legend; they have fancied that by the rock of Tantalus the author of the *Orestes* meant the sun.[3] But how many reasons there are against supposing that this was the thought of Euripides! How can we admit that he thought the sun was attached to Olympus by long chains? And how could the sun, which traverses its course regularly every day, be conceived as being at the mercy of the wind and the storms? For it is certain that whirlwinds are meant in this passage, and not, as Paley[4] would have it, the rotary movement of the celestial system. Finally and above all, neither in Pindar nor in Euripides is the rock of Tantalus incandescent, which would be essential to our recognizing in it the sun of Anaxagoras. The solar rock of the philosopher, and the rock of Tantalus described by the poet, have therefore nothing in common, not even their name.[5]

According to other testimony, Euripides called the sun a "golden mass" (χρυσέα βῶλος), which might recall, though some-

[1] *Orestes*, 982 *et seq.*

[2] *Olymp.* i, 57–59; *Isthm.* viii, 10, 11. Cf. Eurip. *Orestes*, 6, 7.

[3] Schol. Pind. *loc. cit.* Schol. Eurip. *Orestes*, 982.

[4] Page xxix of the Preface to his edition of Euripides.

[5] The former is designated by the word λίθος, the latter by the word βῶλος.

what distantly, Anaxagoras' rock of fire. If we may believe Diogenes Laertius, the expression was found in the *Phaethon*.[1] We certainly cannot convict Diogenes of outright error, as there are preserved to us fragments only of the *Phaethon*. But observe how entirely the figure attributed to Euripides is out of harmony with the scheme of a tragedy in which the sun is a mass neither of rock nor of fire, but one of the *dramatis personae*, a living god. Diogenes, who is often mistaken,—he, for example, cites a verse as belonging to the *Augè* which appears in the *Electra*,[2] —may have erred here also. It is true that the scholiasts, who, less well informed than Diogenes or more circumspect than he, do not speak of the *Phaethon*, also credit Euripides with the words χρυσέα βῶλος, as a designation of the sun.[3] But credence should not be given to testimony which consists of merely two words, and those perhaps emended. Even if the expression came from Euripides, there would still be, between "the golden mass" and the "fiery rock," all the difference which separates a poetic from a scientific term.

But there are some less disputed passages, in which we are assured that we shall find the poet's own thought.

Two fragments of lost tragedies, *Chrysippus* and *Melanippe the Philosopher*, show us that Euripides had an opinion on what had previously been the principal subject of philosophical speculation,—the origin of the world and the formation of things. In the *Chrysippus* he places at the beginning of all two elements: the Earth and the Ether. This Ether, of which Aristophanes made so much fun,[4] begat, so said the poet, men and the gods; the Earth, fructified by the moisture of the Ether, brought forth men, animals and their sustenance.[5] These ideas are amplified in the *Melanippe;* the young girl philosopher says:

[1] Diog. Laert. ii, 3, 10. Former editors (cf. Valckenaer, *Diatribe*, p. 31) thought that they had recovered the expression in the verses of the *Phaethon* quoted by Strabo, i, p. 33; but they had to emend the text, which reads χρυσέᾳ βάλλει φλογί, into χρυσέᾳ βώλῳ φλέγει. There is no warrant for this emendation, which Nauck (fragm. 771) has not adopted.

[2] Diog. Laert. ii, 5, 33. This is verse 379 of the *Electra*.

[3] Schol. Eurip. *Hippol.* 601. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. i, 498.

[4] We shall see hereafter, in chapter ii, what Euripides means by the ether.

[5] *Chrysippus*, fragm. 839, Nauck. Reference was made to these two primordial elements also in the *Antiope* (Probus ad Virg. Eclog. vi, 31, p. 21: "Euripides . . . *terram et aerem* inducit principia rerum esse in *Antiopa*").

"Both heaven and earth were one shape at the first,
But when each from the other they were sundered,
They bore all things, and gave them forth to light,
Trees, winged things, beasts, the ocean's fosterlings
And frames of mortal men."[1]

Is this genesis exactly that of Anaxagoras? Does not, on the contrary, the cosmogony of Euripides differ from the Ionic philosopher's teachings on this subject? Doubtless Euripides, as well as Anaxagoras, held that all was chaos in the beginning; but while the former admits only two primordial elements, of enormous expanse, the latter holds that the elements were infinite both in number and in their diminutiveness.[2] In Euripides the earth and the sky separate from one another at an undetermined moment, we know not how; in Anaxagoras the separation of the elements is brought about by the intervention of Νοῦς, which organizes the world and gives motion to it.

If there is any doctrine which is peculiar to Anaxagoras, it is certainly that of *Nous;* and there is such distinct originality in it that, had Euripides been the faithful disciple of Anaxagoras, as tradition pictures him, he would inevitably have been attracted by this lofty conception, and we should expect to find an echo of it in his plays. Now in what remains to us of Euripides, there are but two passages in which the word Νοῦς is used in the philosophical sense. The first refers to intelligence considered as a divine element in human beings.[3] The other is a passage in the *Daughters of Troy* where Hecuba, not knowing what name to give to the mysterious power that guides human affairs, asks whether this should be called Zeus, and whether in him should be recognized the force of necessity, which rules in nature, or the force of intelligence, which is an attribute of man.[4] The identity of Zeus with intelligence is here merely an hypothesis, advanced among others. Had the poet's mind inclined this way—a matter about which we have no knowledge—we should still be far away from Anaxagoras' theory of Νοῦς, which he did not confound with the chief of the gods. We may therefore say that in Euripides there

[1] Fragm. 484 (Dion. Halic. *Rhet.* ix, 11; Diod. i, 7, 7).
[2] Arist. *Metaph.* i, 3.
[3] Schol. Pind. *Nem.* vi, 7. Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* i, 26, 65.
[4] *Daughters of Troy,* 884 *et seq.*

is not a trace of the theory which, in the system of Anaxagoras, is of first importance. If anybody at that time gave expression to the exact doctrine of the Ionic philosopher, it is not Euripides, but Critias, in the beautiful verses of the *Pirithous*,[1] which are a hymn in honor of *Nous:*

> "O self-begotten, who, in ether rolled
> Endlessly round, by mystic links dost blend
> The nature of all things, whom veils enfold
> Of light, of dark night flecked with gleams of gold,
> Of star-hosts dancing round thee without end!"[2]

Nothing of the kind in Euripides. But in other less important points he seems to reproduce exactly the thought of Anaxagoras when he says that nothing dies, that the elements of substances do not perish, that they are merely dissolved and transformed,[3] and again, when he has Melanippe maintain that there is no such thing as a prodigy in nature.[4] If therefore Euripides has not adopted the whole of Anaxagoras' doctrine, if he has sometimes openly diverged from it, there is nevertheless reason for recognizing that he was influenced by him and by the spirit of his belief. This general influence which the philosopher had on the poet may explain the rather too unqualified assertion of the Greek critics[5] that Euri-

[1] The *Pirithous*, it is true, is often cited as a drama of Euripides; but since antiquity there has been doubt whether it ought to be attributed to Euripides or to Critias (Athen. xi, p. 496 b). It was even formally ranked with the *Tennes* and the *Rhadamanthus*, among the apocryphal dramas (*Life*, Schwartz, p. 3, l. 2). The fragments of it which are preserved justify these suspicions. Considerations of diction and of metre seem to be against attributing these fragments to Euripides. See von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea*, p. 162. Bergk (*Griech. Liter.* vol. iii, p. 612) conjectures that the *Pirithous* was by Critias, but that it was performed under the name of Euripides.

[2] Fragm. 593 of Euripides, Nauck (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* v, 717).

[3] Fragment 839 of the *Chrysippus* cited above, verses 12–14. Euripides, like Anaxagoras, uses the verb διακρίνεσθαι to designate the movement of separation of the molecules of bodies.

[4] Dion. Halic. *Rhet.* ix, 11. Cf. Plut. *Life of Pericles*, vi, 2, 3.

[5] Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff was the first, to our knowledge, to cast doubt upon this tradition, in his *Analecta Euripidea* (pp. 163–165), published in 1875. Bergk (*Griech. Liter.* vol. iii, pp. 469, 470) has shown himself equally sceptical, but does not give all the reasons for his doubts.—We have upon reflection modified the rather extreme conclusions expressed in an essay entitled *Euripide et Anaxagore* (*Revue des études grecques*, vol. ii, p. 234 *et seq.*), of which the preceding pages, apart from certain corrections of detail, are merely a reproduction.

pides belongs to the school of Anaxagoras. If Euripides was a disciple, he was an independent disciple, who never became a slave to the teachings of his master, and who above all learned from him how to take a liberal and discriminating view of nature and of mankind.

III

PROBABLE RELATIONS BETWEEN EURIPIDES AND SOCRATES

HE IS NOT, HOWEVER, A FOLLOWER OF SOCRATES

Euripides may also have associated with Socrates. Between the innovator in the drama and the innovator in philosophy there was a sort of intellectual kinship, by which the Greeks were so much struck that they sought to adduce proofs of it. Aelian relates that Socrates, who rarely went to the theatre, never failed to attend when Euripides had a new play performed, though he had to go even to the Piraeus; so much pleasure did he get from his "wisdom"—meaning his philosophical spirit—and from the excellence of his poetry.[1] The contemporary writers of comedy have transformed these relations into a close bond: they even pretend that Socrates collaborated with Euripides in his plays. "It is he," says one of the characters in the *Clouds*,[2] "who composes for Euripides those blabbing and sophistical tragedies." In a comedy of Callias likewise, one of Euripides' characters declared that he had a right to be proud, as Socrates was his author.[3] Telecleides, punning on the name of the poet's *Phrygians*, said: "Here is Mnesilochus cooking (φρύγει) a new drama of Euripides, and Socrates putting kindlings under the pot."[4] But what else does this signify than that in the view of the comic poets Euripides and

[1] *Var. Hist.* ii, 13.

[2] In the first edition. Aristoph. ap. Diog. Laert. ii, 18 (cap. 5, 2). The passage, however, is not by Diogenes, but by an interpolator whose lack of skill is quite evident.

[3] Diog. Laert. *loc. cit.*

[4] *Life*, p. 1, l. 12 *et seq.* Diog. Laert. *loc. cit.*, who in place of Telecleides mistakenly names Mnesimachus, a poet of the middle comedy. In the same passage a little farther on, Bergk has thought the expression Εὐριπίδας σωκρατογόμφους suspicious (*Vit. Eurip.* n. 15); he would read, in a single composite word, Εὐριπιδοσωκρατοκόμπους, "people who have the philosophic pride of Euripides and of Socrates."

Socrates were of a common mind? The comic poets, no doubt, were not entirely mistaken in this, but they exaggerated the affinity of the two men; for in philosophy Euripides had a taste for physical research, with which Socrates would have nothing to do, and in religion he attacked the popular faith, which Socrates respected. Quite aside from this the philosopher's influence on the poet is anything but established. Chronology flatly contradicts the passages which show us Euripides leaving the school of Anaxagoras in order to follow the teaching of Socrates.[1] A poet of so searching a turn of mind, so open to all innovations, must, it is true, have been attracted by Socrates' original method of teaching; he must have come into relation with Socrates, have heard him, and have led him to talk. But at what period? At just the time when the latter began to be known in the market and on the streets of Athens,—about the first years of the Peloponnesian War. Euripides, who had arrived at the middle of his career as a dramatist, was then more than fifty years old. Did Socrates' talks change his views about man's life and his ideas of morality? Does the Socratic spirit appear after this date in passages of his dramas?

That spirit, whatever may have been said about it,[2] has left but very faint traces. Euripides repeatedly distinguishes and contrasts two kinds of love: sensuous love, that of Cypris, which torments man to the point of madness; and love inspired by noble souls, which conduces to his well-being.[3] He also says:

> "Love is the one most perfect of all schools
> For wisdom's lessons and for virtue's rules."[4]

Does this not foreshadow the "philosopher Eros" of Plato's *Symposium*?[5] Now, as the Platonic theory of love has its source in Socratic teaching, we may maintain, if we choose, that Euripides has here made himself the echo of Socrates' tenets. We cannot really affirm anything, because the passages which we have just cited belong to the *Medea* and the *Dictys*, and go back to a

[1] Dion. Halic. *Rhet.* ix, 11. Cf. viii, 10. Aul. Gell. xv, 20.

[2] The discussion of M. G. Feugère, *De Socraticae doctrinae vestigiis apud Euripidem* (1874), does not appear to us to establish its positions. It contains ingenious views, but its comparisons are forced and inexact.

[3] Fragm. 331 and 672, Nauck.

[4] *Medea*, 842. Fragm. 897.

[5] *Symp.* p. 204 b.

date[1] when, in all probability, Socrates was still without influence, and when Euripides, who by reason of his genius and of his studies understood the human soul so well, may of himself, without the inspiration of another, have reached this differentiation of the two kinds of love.[2]

A fact less open to doubt is that certain of Euripides' maxims are in direct conflict with Socrates' most fundamental ideas. The story goes that the philosopher was once present at the performance of the *Electra:* when he heard Orestes maintain that there is no sure sign by which one may recognize the generous man and that "the wisest course is to leave to chance all judgment about virtue," he got up from his seat and left the theatre.[3] This public and marked evidence of Socrates' disapproval of Euripides may be nothing but a random invention; but the story certainly tends to show that Euripides was not always regarded by the Greeks as a preacher of Socratic philosophy. Those who may be tempted to represent him as such cannot have read him well. To choose a salient example: is the great Socratic principle that morality is inseparable from knowledge found anywhere in the poet's works? The passages that have been interpreted to this effect do not appear to us to bear the meaning attributed to them. In that from the *Hecuba*[4] the influence of education—not of knowledge—on virtue is admitted only to a limited extent, and the influence of heredity is claimed to be not less powerful.[5] In the passage from the *Suppliants*[6] the poet recognizes the influence of education on military honor and manly courage. But it is evident that this kind of education depends chiefly on example, that it does not constitute knowledge in the sense in which Socrates understood that word. On the other hand, the passages in Euripides which contradict the Socratic principle are many: Phaedra is not the only one who declares that man recognizes the right, without having the

[1] These two plays were performed in 431.

[2] Must we see an imitation of Socratic irony in the dialogue in the *Hippolytus* where the servant (88–101), wishing to induce his master to honor Cypris, tries to bring him to it by a series of questions which he puts to him, and to which the latter concedes assent?

[3] Diog. Laert. ii, 33.

[4] *Hecuba*, 595 *et seq.*

[5] See *Hecuba*, 599: ἆρ' οἱ τεκόντες διαφέρουσιν ἢ τροφαί; In the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 560 *et seq.*, the influence of education on virtue is more plainly affirmed.

[6] *Suppl.* 915–918.

strength to perform it;[1] other characters express exactly the same belief. The poet several times returns to the idea that nature—that is to say, instinct or passion—is a potent force, which does violence to reason, and against which education is powerless.[2] The latter, he says, is efficacious neither in correcting the baleful effects of heredity, nor in effecting the metamorphosis of evil into good.[3] Is that the language of a disciple of Socrates? The Greek critics, misguided by the pleasantries of the comic writers, are wrong when they represent Euripides as a disciple reared in the school of Socratic philosophy. But we may assume, notwithstanding the silence of Xenophon and Plato on this point, that intimacy existed between these two men, who, in varying degrees and by different means, revolutionized the ideas of their day.

IV

EURIPIDES' RELATIONS WITH PROTAGORAS
TRACES OF THE SOPHISTICAL SPIRIT IN HIS DRAMAS

Euripides, although Socrates' friend, was at the same time, it is claimed, a friend of the sophists. Tradition even says that he was their pupil.[4] But this tradition takes little account of time. Gorgias cannot properly be called the teacher of Euripides, because he first came to Athens in 427, when the latter was many years beyond the school age. Nor can that designation be given to Prodicus of Ceos, who was the poet's junior by about twenty years.[5] Protagoras, born about 480,[6] as was Euripides, is the only

[1] *Hippol.* 376 *et seq.*

[2] *Medea*, 1078–1080. *Electra*, 367 *et seq.* *Antiope*, fragm. 220, Nauck. *Oenomaus*, fragm. 572, verses 4, 5. *Chrysippus*, fragm. 840 and 841. *Phoenix*, fragm. 810. Fragm. incert. 920, 1113.

[3] Fragm. 1068, Nauck (Stob. *Floril.* 90, 3).

[4] *Life*, p. 1, l. 10, Schwartz.

[5] Zeller (*Philos. der Griechen*, vol. i, p. 1060) places his birth approximately between 465 and 460 B. C. Bergk (*Griech. Literat.* vol. iii, p. 473) finds in certain passages of Euripides (*Suppl.* 196, 1109) where pessimistic views of human life are expressed the influence of Prodicus, who was also a pessimist, as we see by his discourse on death, quoted in the *Axiochus*, pp. 366 c–369 c. But these analogies prove nothing. Is it necessary to have been at the school of a philosopher to be impressed by the evils of existence?

[6] See Zeller, *op. cit.* vol. i, p. 1050.

sophist who, although not exactly his teacher, may possibly have exerted some influence on his mind. During the first stay which Protagoras made at Athens[1] Euripides may have gone to hear him and may have entered into relations with him which were to be lasting, even though he did not bring his money to Protagoras, as the younger men were in the habit of doing. Protagoras is said to have read at the house of Euripides that treatise *Concerning the Gods* which obliged him to fly from Athens.[2] It is also related that when Protagoras died, the victim of a shipwreck, Euripides alluded to that unfortunate ending[3] in his *Ixion*. We cannot deny that the poet knew the sophist: he has borrowed from him some of his maxims, which in the theatre must have shocked the public conscience. The remark made by one of the characters in the *Aeolus*, "that no practice is disgraceful if it does not appear such to those who indulge in it,"[4] is the immediate consequence of Protagoras' principle: "Man is the measure of all things." From this principle also springs the declaration of Eteocles, in the *Phoenician Maidens*, that men attach different meanings to the same words, that they do not agree among themselves upon what they call the beautiful and the good.[5] And lastly another character declares, after the manner of Protagoras, that

> "On every theme may one find arguments
> On either side, if one be subtle of speech."[6]

Euripides is not, however, a zealous admirer of the rhetoric of the sophists. Once only he appears to recommend it:

> "Wherefore, O wherefore, at all other lore
> Toil men, as needeth, and make eager quest,
> Yet Suasion, the unrivalled queen of men,

[1] Plato, *Protag.* p. 310e.

[2] Diog. Laert. ix, 54 (cap. 8, 5). The tradition was not well fixed on this point, as, according to others, Protagoras read his work at the house of Megacleides, or at the Lyceum.

[3] Philoch. ap. Diog. Laert. ix, 55.

[4] Fragm. 19, Nauck. This verse, parodied by Aristophanes (*Frogs*, 1475), has often been made the source of reproach to Euripides. Plut. *Mor.* p. 33c. Stob. *Floril.* v, 82. Athen. xiii, p. 582d.

[5] Verse 499 *et seq.* Let us note, however, that the poet does not make this reflection on his own account: he places it in the mouth of Eteocles, who pleads a bad cause, and he subsequently has Eteocles condemned by the chorus and by Polyneices.

[6] *Antiope*, fragm. 189. Cf. Diog. Laert. ix, 51.

> Nor price we pay, nor make ado to learn her
> Unto perfection, so a man might sway
> His fellows as he would, and win his ends?"[1]

This sort of approval of the new teachers of youth must not be taken too seriously. If we affected to find in it the sincere expression of the poet's thought, we might fairly be accused of error, for it is easy to make him contradict himself on this point, and in the same play. It is, indeed, in the *Hecuba* that we read: "When a man has done wrong, his words should be weak and he should never succeed in palliating injustice. Very clever indeed are those who have the prescriptions of this art, but their cleverness cannot maintain itself to the end."[2] Like Socrates, Euripides elsewhere deplores the baneful effects of empty rhetoric, of the "too beautiful words" which aim only to flatter our ears, without regard for the truth and the right.[3] He desires that eloquence shall be honest and never serve to palliate disgraceful actions.[4] Aeschylus had said before him[5] that the language of truth is simple. He adds:

> "And justice needs no subtle sophistries:
> Itself hath fitness; but the unrighteous plea (ἄδικος λόγος),
> Having no soundness, needeth cunning salves."[6]

The skill which is used to triumph over truth seems to him despicable. The fine theories of the sophists, with their infallible means of assuring to the ἥττων λόγος victory over the κρείττων, have therefore not seduced him, and he intimates to his audience that nobody ought to fall a victim to them.

The contagion of this rhetoric which does not deceive him has, however, infected him unawares. Whether he really associated too much with the sophists, or whether there existed a natural affinity between his mind and those of the best among them, we certainly meet in his plays—more especially in those written after the first years of the Peloponnesian War—oratorical methods

[1] *Hecuba*, 814 *et seq.*

[2] *Hecuba*, 1187 *et seq.*

[3] *Hippol.* 486–489. *Med.* 580. *Antiope*, fragm. 206. Cf. *Hippol. καλυπτ.* fragm. 439.

[4] *Bacch.* 266 *et seq. Phoen. Maid.* 526.

[5] Fragm. 176, Nauck.

[6] *Phoen. Maid.* 469–472. Cf. *Archelaus*, fragm. 253.

which recall the art of Gorgias and of Protagoras. I do not wish to speak of the debates in which two actors of a drama engage, each in turn pleading his cause before a third person who takes the part of judge. The Athenians were delighted to see on the stage this reproduction of their suits at law. They were extremely interested in the pleadings of Hecuba and Polymestor before Agamemnon,[1] in those of Iolaus and Copreus before Theseus.[2] In the *Daughters of Troy* they watched with curiosity how Menelaus would decide between Hecuba, the plaintiff, and Helena, the defendant.[3] Such scenes as these, which Euripides was not the only dramatist to use, but which he employed with special satisfaction, are readily explained by the people's taste at that time, and it is not necessary to attribute their conception to the influence of the sophists. This influence is recognizable elsewhere. There is no doubt about it in those singular controversies where the poet amuses himself by letting two of his *dramatis personae* maintain the pro and the contra of the same matter; where, in their words, he develops two theses which he opposes to one another, regular orations, clumsily inserted into the dialogue, hindering its movement and interrupting its progress.[4]

To this class belongs the discussion between Lycus and Amphitryon about the value of the bow: the former declares that only cowards use it, the latter brings out the advantages of a weapon with which we never miss aim, and keep our enemy at a distance.[5] This discussion is merely an incident in a scene of the *Heracles;* it is not very long and forms part of a more important debate. In the *Suppliants* a large space is accorded to two antithetical arguments on the disadvantages of a democracy and the disadvantages of a tyranny.[6] These arguments are not, it is true, symmetrical, but of very unequal lengths. The herald of Creon, who is yet charged with idle talking, employs but few words to speak the ill that he thinks of democracy, whereas Theseus gives himself full scope in extolling popular government to the detri-

[1] *Hecuba*, 1129–1151.
[2] *Children of Heracles*, 134–231.
[3] *Daughters of Troy*, 914–1059.
[4] Cf. James Lees, *On the* δικανικὸς λόγος *in Euripides*, in the *Studies of the University of Nebraska*, vol. i, no. 4.
[5] *Heracles*, 160–164, 188–203.
[6] *Suppl.* 410–422, 426–455.

ment of monarchical government. Although the match between the opponents is not an even one, the question between them is really, according to the poet's own statement, a contest of words (*ἀγών, ἄμιλλα λόγων*),[1]—a sort of oratorical duel which takes place on the stage, with the audience as witness and judge, and which naturally ends in victory for the champion of Athens and in discomfiture for the Theban.

Two contradictory arguments, of another kind and of a more serious interest, were advanced in the *Antiope*, and advocated by two brothers. Zethus and Amphion are as different by nature as any two brothers can be. The one, strong and of a rough disposition, takes pleasure in bodily exercise only, and cares merely for the physical life; the other, delicate and of a gentle disposition, has a taste for music and for the spiritual life. This contrast was brought into relief in a celebrated scene, where each of the two brothers, while pleading for his own character and favorite occupations, seeks to convince the other that he is making bad use of his life. "You neglect," says Zethus to Amphion, "what ought to be your first care. While nature has given you a man's soul, you affect to resemble a woman."[2] "A man favored by fortune, who neglects his affairs, and enthralled by the charm of music has no other cares, will be a useless member of the family and of the state."[3] And again: "Follow my advice, my brother. Silence your songs and follow the muse of battle. If you wish to deserve the name of a sensible man, here is the music to which you ought to apply yourself: digging, tilling the soil, herding the flocks. Leave to others those ingenious refinements from which you will get no other benefit than the impoverishment of your house."[4] Amphion replies to him: "You reproach me with being weak in body and delicate like a woman. You are wrong. If I have a vigorous mind, that is a power far greater than strength of arm."[5]

[1] *Suppl.* 427, 428. Cf. 456: *καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ πρὸς τάδ' ἐξηκόντισα.* Moreover the word *ἀγών* is frequently used in its legal meaning in the discussions which take place between Euripides' characters: e. g. *Androm.* 234; *Children of Heracles*, 116; *Heracles*, 1311; *Suppl.* 427.

[2] *Antiope*, fragm. 185. [3] Fragm. 187. [4] Fragm. 188.

[5] Fragm. 199. On the ancient fragments of the tragedy *Antiope* see the study of H. Weil in the *Journal général de l'Instruction publique*, vol. xvi (1847), pp. 850–853, 858–861. The fragments recently discovered in Egypt and published by Professor Mahaffy (*Hermathena*, vol. xvii) have no bearing on this scene.

Two arguments were thus brought face to face. The advantages of a contemplative life and of intellectual culture are contrasted with the advantages of a practical life and of physical exercise; or rather, if we are to appreciate the full import of this scene, the new education is contrasted with the old. It was, then, the same subject as that which forms the basis of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, with this difference,—that Aristophanes' sympathies are for the past, for "the veterans of Marathon," while Euripides, who in his tragedy gives the winning part to Amphion, disciple of the philosophers, hopes for the triumph of the new spirit. But this scene, whatever may have been intended by it, seems, according to the extant fragments, to have all the characteristics of a school exercise, in the style of the rhetoricians of the day. The Greeks, at no time in their existence, separated in actual life the things which the fiction of this drama brings into conflict,—gymnastics and "music."

Euripides may also have learned from Protagoras how to make the unrighteous cause prevail. The dramatic poet—it is one of the necessities of his art—sometimes finds himself in the position in which the lawyer of our own times is often placed despite himself, and in which the Greek sophists placed themselves of their own choice: he finds himself obliged to make one of his characters plead a cause which is not good; he must try to crush the κρείττων λόγος under the weight of the ἥττων, the Just under the Unjust. We know that famous scene in the *Medea* where Jason is brought for the first time face to face with her whom he has betrayed. To this woman who recalls to him the past, the favors done, the tenderness of other days, the promises of eternal fidelity, he has but poor excuses to offer,—and in fact those that he offers are poor. If his expedition into Colchis was successful, it is not to Medea that he owes its success, but to Cypris, and to Eros, who, by wounding the daughter of Aetes with his invincible shafts, obliged her to save him. Medea ought to consider herself fortunate in escaping from a barbarous country to come and live in a civilized land like Greece, which knows how to appreciate her magic art and which will bestow fame upon her. He dares to pretend and to demonstrate that, in marrying the daughter of the king of Corinth, he has given evidence of chastity, of wisdom and of de-

votion. If he desires to have other children by a new wife, it is because that wife is of royal blood; it is in order to assure protection to the children he has had by Medea.[1] It might perhaps have been hard for him to find excuses better than these, which are worthless. But it is important to observe that Jason replies to the reproaches of Medea like a man who, as he himself says, "is not unskilled in the art of speech;"[2] that he refutes them methodically, point by point, with cold and cruel logic, with a subtlety of argument which is not foreign to the art of the sophists. Similarly, in the *Daughters of Troy*, Helen has at her command an abundance of bad excuses with which to vindicate herself in the eyes of Menelaus,[3]—not solely because she is a woman, but because the poet who places her on the stage possesses all the resources, all the newest recipes, of the art of persuasion.[4] Aristophanes is not wrong when he makes Euripides say that he has introduced into tragedy "the art of reasoning and of examining," or when he taunts him with "slipperiness and evasiveness" in the speeches of his heroes, who are too frequently transformed into special pleaders.[5]

Subtle ideas are indeed not lacking in his plays. But, just as if he feared they might go unnoticed, he takes the precaution—and this is surprising—to call attention to them: he underlines them, so to speak. "Can you have become, without anybody's suspecting it, a clever reasoner?" says Apollo to Thanatus.[6] Jason announces that one of the reasons he is about to give Medea is ingeniously shrewd (λεπτός).[7] Hippolytus charges his father with misplaced "subtlety."[8] Hecuba, although she has just heard the account of the touching death of Polyxena, indulges in ill-timed reflections;[9] then she stops, her dissertation once finished, to de-

[1] *Medea*, 522–575.

[2] *Medea*, 522.

[3] *Daughters of Troy*, 914 *et seq.*

[4] Study of the speech of Helen reveals tricks of rhetoric: imagined objections, anticipated refutations, concessions to the adversary, etc. Cf. the speech of Hippolytus, in the play of that name, 983 *et seq.*

[5] *Frogs*, 973; 775, λυγισμῶν καὶ στροφῶν.

[6] *Alcestis*, 58.

[7] *Medea*, 529.

[8] *Hippol.* 923, οὐ γὰρ ἐν δέοντι λεπτουργεῖς.

[9] Euripides was reproached for this even in antiquity. Theon, *Progymn.* p. 149, Walz.

clare that these considerations are like "shafts shot into space."[1] A singular poet this, who feels that such a digression is out of place in his drama, who knows it, who says it, and who does not suppress it! Is it simply a *jeu d'esprit* when he criticises himself in this wise? Is it not rather that he intends incidentally to please an audience that reasons and is fond of subtleties, the youth who listen to the sophists and admire them, and that he desires to have this attention noticed, and means to let people know the cost of it?

He has other points of contact with these virtuosi of speech. Those among them who first attempted a scientific study of language, such as Protagoras, who made his disciples pay fifty drachmas for the pleasure of hearing him discourse on "the correct use of words,"[2] have contributed through their teaching to the refinement of the Hellenic tongue. Euripides also, whose style, notwithstanding its seeming simplicity, is not free from studied elegance, seems to have brought that language to a degree of refinement unknown before his day. Long would be the list of words that he seems to have invented or compounded to express the shades of his meaning,—words which at least do not occur before him, and which are not met with after him.[3] Like the sophists, he delights also in etymologies,[4] in which Aeschylus and Sophocles had shown themselves less prodigal.

The kinship which unites him with the sophists is real but not close: it cannot be denied that he was often animated by their spirit. These dealers in wisdom came to Athens too late, it is true, to have sold their knowledge to the poet in his youth, which was not formed in their likeness. Euripides had arrived at a mature

[1] *Hecuba*, 603. Cf. fragm. 924, Nauck, *μή μοι λεπτῶν θίγγανε μύθων, ψυχή.*

[2] Plato jokes more than once on this subject: *Protag.* pp. 337 a, 339 e; *Crat.* p. 384 b; *Euthyd.* p. 277 e, etc.

[3] We cannot here give the proofs of our conclusions reached after a close study of the text of many tragedies of Euripides. This subject would furnish material for a special work.

[4] He explains exactly the names of Polyneices (*Phoen. Maid.* 1494), Pentheus (*Bacch.* 367), Theonoe (*Helen*, 13), Thoas (*Iphig. in Taur.* 32). — The interpretations of the names of Alexander (fragm. 64; Varro, *Ling. L.* vii, 82), Aphrodite (*Daughters of Troy*, 989), Amphion (*Etym. M.* p. 92, ll. 24–27; Hygin. *Fab.* 7), Atreus (*Iphig. at Aul.* 321), Capaneus (*Suppl.* 496), Ion (*Ion*, 661), Meleager (fragm. 517), Telephus (Moses Choren. *Progymn.* ap. Meineke, *Com. Graec. Frag.* vol. v, p. 57), Zethus (fragm. 181), are entirely fantastic, as in general are the etymologies in Plato's *Cratylus.*

age when he met Protagoras; he can have associated with Gorgias, Prodicus and the others only at the verge of old age. For this reason it is impossible to learn with certainty what he owes to them and to determine in his plays exactly what comes from them. If Euripides had not given up philosophy for the stage, he might possibly have become, without the aid of anybody's instruction, solely through his own reflections and by following the natural bent of his genius, one of the greatest, if not the first, among the sophists. In common with them he had the spirit of inquiry which examines everything and questions everything, the irony which penetrates prevailing prejudices and conventional ideas, the sceptical audacity which shakes religious traditions to their very foundations. Wittingly or unwittingly, he engaged in their work.

CHAPTER II

CRITICISM OF RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS IN EURIPIDES

I

THE SPIRIT OF DOUBT BEFORE HIS TIME AND AMONG HIS CONTEMPORARIES

ONE of the forms in which the philosophizing spirit is manifested in Euripides is criticism of the ideas his contemporaries entertained about the gods and the divine legends. This criticism is surprising when met in tragedy, but it was not a novel thing in Greece. Before Euripides' time historians, philosophers, even poets, had been imbued with the same spirit of independence in regard to religious traditions. Hecataeus of Miletus, for whom the dog Cerberus is a real serpent at Taenarum, and the triple Geryon an ancient king of Epirus,[1] heralds the coming of Euhemerus. Herodotus, sometimes so credulous, is struck by the improbability of the legend of Heracles in Egypt; he refuses to believe that doves with human voices founded the oracle of Dodona; the Vale of Tempe does not appear to him to be the work of Poseidon, but the result of an earthquake.[2] The philosophers are bolder. Xenophanes of Elis had said, long before Protagoras, that men knew nothing about the gods, and never could know anything definite about them.[3] When he rebukes the Greeks for endowing their gods with human shape and human passions, he attacks the very principle of their religion. When he declares that in his eyes the divine being is eternal, one and immutable, he inaugurates a new theology which is the denial of the old. Empedocles, shocked by the tales current about the gods, demands that people shall speak well of them and that their opinions about them shall not be obscured by false conceptions.[4] Anaxagoras, though he does not

[1] Hecataeus, fragm. 346, 349 (C. Mueller, *Fragm. Hist. Graec.* vol. i, p. 27).

[2] Herod. ii, 45, 55–57; vii, 129.

[3] Fragm. 14, Mullach (Sext. Emp. vii, 49; viii, 326). Cf. Arist. *Poet.* xxv, p. 1460 b, 36.

[4] Fragm. 386–388.

make a direct attack on the popular belief, undermines it, since he substitutes new explanations of the origin of things for the ancient cosmogony. His Νοῦς, whose original initiative has regulated everything, leaves nothing for Cronus or for Zeus to do in the organization of the world, and reduces to nought the intervention of the countless gods of the Greeks in the uninterrupted life of nature.

But neither Xenophanes, nor Empedocles, nor Anaxagoras, appealed to the masses: the spirit of doubt must have the voice of the poets for its propagation. The most pious among these will be the most inclined to point out the absurdity or the immorality of certain divine legends. Pindar conceives the divine being as so noble and so much superior to man that to attribute to it acts which lower or dishonor it is absolutely repulsive to him. The feast of Tantalus horrifies him; he is firm in his disbelief of it.[1] "Man should say nought unseemly of the gods," is his rule,[2] — a rule that permits him to brush aside more than one disagreeable story. He also observes — with a freedom of judgment which marks the beginning of criticism — that many fables have different versions, that some of them are splendid lies, and that only the charms of poetry have been able to make the improbable credible.[3] Nor does Aeschylus blindly accept all legendary traditions. When Apollo, in one of his dramas, pleads the cause of Orestes, and says that Zeus considers the murder of a father as a greater crime than the murder of a mother, the Eumenides reply that Zeus contradicts himself, for he loaded his aged father Cronus with chains.[4] Thus Aeschylus does not hesitate to point out what is contrary to the natural laws of the family in the legend of Cronus, conquered and dethroned by his son. Moreover, he does not shrink from occasionally modifying the genealogies of the gods, nor from identifying Themis with Gaia, "single being of manifold names,"[5] thereby conveying the idea that there are far fewer divine beings than there are divine names. In his eyes also, Zeus is at one and the same time the ether, the earth, the sky, all things and that which

[1] *Olymp.* i, 52 (82). [2] *Olymp.* i, 35 (55).

[3] *Nem.* viii, 20 (32). *Olymp.* i, 28 (42) *et seq.*

[4] *Eumen.* 612, 613, Weil (640, 641).

[5] *Prometh.* 210, if indeed this verse is not an interpolation.

is above all things,[1]—a conception as lofty as it is contrary to the creed of the masses. The religious audacity of Aeschylus has therefore preceded the sceptical audacity of Euripides, and in the days of the latter, people's minds were prepared to hear, even in the theatre, doubt cast on what concerned the gods. But on this path, upon which he was not the first to enter, Euripides was to walk more resolutely and to go farther than his predecessors.

He was, it is true, supported by the spirit of the times in which he lived. Our ignorance about the precise dates when the sophists lived, and about those of a large number of Euripides' tragedies, no doubt prevents all exact determination, and we cannot say whether the poet's attacks on the religion of the masses preceded or followed other attacks. But we may remark, in a general way, that Euripides, in the second half of his career, was contemporary with Protagoras, Democritus, Prodicus, Critias and Diagoras. In the beginning of a treatise which together with others was burnt in the public square at Athens, Protagoras declared that it was impossible for him to know whether the gods existed, or did not exist. Human life seemed to him too short to reach a solution of so obscure a problem.[2] The gods likewise puzzled Democritus, who, not daring to eliminate them entirely from the mechanical world that he had dreamed of, relegated them to the rank of good and of evil demons.[3] Prodicus and Critias both sought to explain the origin of religion. The former found its cause in the tendency which men have to deify that which is useful to them: at one time the sun and the moon, rivers and springs, had been considered as gods; it was bread that was worshipped by the name of Demeter, wine by the name of Dionysus, water by the name of Poseidon, fire by the name of Hephaestus.[4] Again, Critias, a poet like Euripides, and like him a writer of tragedies which were so full of the spirit of Euripides as sometimes to be attributed to him,[5] expounded at length in his *Sisyphus* how the worship of the gods

[1] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* v, 603.

[2] Diog. Laert. ix, 51, 54. Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* i, 23, 63.

[3] Sext. Emp. *Math.* ix, 19. He also sought to explain the belief in the gods by the extraordinary phenomena of nature, such as storms, eclipses of the sun and moon, etc. Sext. Emp. *Math.* ix, 24.

[4] Sext. Emp. *Math.* ix, 18, 51. Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* i, 42, 118.

[5] On the works of Critias see Lallier, *De Critiae tyranni vita et scriptis* (1875).

had originated. In regulating men's affairs, the earliest legislators had established, he says, punishments for public crimes only and for vices which were openly displayed; but hidden misdeeds, those which elude the penal laws, had also to be prevented. Therefore, in order to frighten men some wise man persuaded them that all their deeds, all their words, even their most secret thoughts, had as an invisible and ever present witness a god who dwelt in the region of thunder and lightning and whose anger had formidable consequences.[1] Critias, who thus explains the origin of religions, was always regarded by the Greeks as an atheist.[2] As to Diagoras of Melos, who ridiculed the mysteries, who made fun of the gods, who threw a wooden Heracles into the fire, so that the hero might complete his thirteenth labor,[3] he had made so great a display of impiety that the epithet ἄθεος properly became inseparable from his name. Why should his associates, why should the followers of Critias, and the young men who paid for the lessons of Prodicus and of Protagoras, have been scandalized at what they heard in the theatre when certain plays of Euripides were brought out? They evidently must have left the trouble of protesting to those less enlightened.

II

CRITICISM OF MYTHOLOGICAL LEGENDS, AS CONDEMNED BY COMMON SENSE AND OPPOSED TO MORALITY DOUBTS REGARDING THE GODS—THE NATURE OF ZEUS THE DRAMA OF THE "BACCHANALS" THE ORPHIC MYSTERIES

Myths are the special material of tragedy. Euripides, since he was a tragic poet, could not cast doubt upon them nor question their truth as a whole. But while he never had the imprudence to say that the traditions which furnished the plots of his plays were purely fables, he had no scruples about expressing his scepticism regarding other legends that he met on his way. We know

[1] Critias, ap. Sext. Emp. *Math.* ix, 54. The same verses are attributed by the pseudo-Plutarch (*Placita Philos.* i, 7, 2) to Euripides.

[2] Plut. *De Superst.* 13.

[3] Athenag. *Legat. pro Christ.* 5.

the story of the birth of Helen and of the Dioscuri. The lord of heaven, Zeus, in order to be united with Leda, the wife of Tyndareus, changes himself into a swan. As a result of this union Leda lays two eggs: at the end of nine months Helen is hatched from one of these eggs, and from the other issue forth Castor and Pollux. Euripides cites this legend twice in the following terms:

> . . . "The tale
> Telleth that to my mother Leda flew
> Zeus, who had stoln the likeness of a swan
> And, fleeing from a chasing eagle, wrought
> By guile his pleasure, — if the tale be true."[1]

This certainly is not a denial; it is only a reservation, but one from which we easily divine the poet's belief. This belief is expressed with greater precision in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*. The chorus speaks:

> "If credence-worthy the story be
> That Leda bare to a winged bird thee,
> When Zeus with its plumes had his changed form decked,
> Or whether in scrolls of minstrelsy
> Such tales unto mortals hath Fable brought,
> Told out of season, and all for nought."[2]

Two hypotheses are here set up, but there is no room for doubt that the poet inclines to the second, and that he charges the ancient poets with the invention of Leda's swan.

This bent of mind is seen elsewhere as well. In the Argive legend of Atreus and Thyestes, there is a sheep with golden fleece, a wonderful animal given by Hermes to Atreus, to the possession of which is attached the privilege of kingship. One day Thyestes steals the animal from his brother and leads it off to his own stables. Subsequently he comes to the agora of Mycenae and declares that the throne should belong to him. Zeus takes the part of Atreus. In order to denounce to mankind the theft of Thyestes, and to give striking testimony of the rights of the injured Atreus, he performs a miracle: he orders the stars and the sun to change their course. Since that day the sun is said to rise in the place where

[1] *Helen*, 17–21.

[2] *Iphig. at Aul.* 794–800. The passage in the *Helen* (257–259) where the eggs of Leda are again mentioned cannot be adduced as evidence, as it is manifestly interpolated.

formerly it used to set.[1] Euripides relates this legend in a chorus of the *Electra*, but he follows its recital with very sceptical reflections: "That is what people say, but I have great difficulty in believing it. How could the sun with face of gold have turned back his flaming chariot and changed his route, for the punishment of men, on account of a fault committed by a mortal?" And the chorus adds: "The fables which frighten mortals promote the worship of the gods."[2] Euripides insinuates that the stories which convey the highest idea of the miraculous power of the gods have been invented by those who had an interest in making the gods appear formidable.

The legends which we have just recalled to mind, although they were spread throughout the whole of Greece by the poets, originated, the one in Sparta, the other in Argos: might not an Athenian be allowed to mock at them, especially at a time when the Spartans, and perhaps the Argives too, were his enemies? To attack Attic legends, or merely to venture an incredulous smile when quoting them, was a more serious matter. But Euripides did not altogether abstain from criticising them. One of the most cherished ideas of the Athenians was that of their autochthony, which they expressed in poetry and on their monuments by the image of Erichthonius, the newly born, whom the Earth draws forth from her bosom in order to present him to Athena.[3] "Is it true," asks the youthful Ion, "that Erichthonius was born of the soil?" And Creusa answers in the affirmative.[4] But a little farther on, when Ion is anxious to know whether he himself, like Erichthonius, may not have had the Earth for his mother, Xuthus, who is here the spokesman of Euripides, tells him plainly and without circumlocution that this is an empty pretence and that "children do not spring from the soil."[5] Toward the end of the play, the poet places in the mouth of Ion, who is addressing his mother, a practical but rather impertinent explanation of the legendary amours of Creusa and Apollo. Creusa affirms that it was the god who wronged her. "Would that not be a convenient

[1] Plato, *Polit.* pp. 268 e, 269 a.

[2] *Electra*, 737 *et seq.*

[3] Otfried Müller, *Denkm. d. alt. Kunst*, vol. i, no. 211. *Arch. Zeitung*, 1873, pl. 63, etc.

[4] *Ion*, 265 *et seq.*

[5] *Ion*, 542.

way," says the youth, "for a young girl to disguise the fault she has committed with a mortal?"[1]

Not far from the scene of the legend of Creusa, the Athenians had erected a sanctuary to the Eumenides.[2] We know the part these deities play in the dramas of Aeschylus, where one entire tragedy is full of their deeds, and in how dreadful a guise they are portrayed. There is nothing more lifelike than the Erinyes in Aeschylus. What becomes of them in Euripides? There is a scene in one of his dramas—a very pathetic scene—in which we witness a crisis in the delirium of Orestes. The sufferer, calm but a moment ago, is suddenly again seized by his fears: he sees the Furies by his side.

"Mother!—'beseech thee, hark thou not on me
Yon maidens gory-eyed and snaky-haired!
Lo there!—lo there!—they are nigh—they leap on me."

Electra replies to him:

"Stay, hapless one, unshuddering on thy couch:
Nought of thy vivid vision seest thou."[3]

Thus Electra, or rather the poet who makes her speak, does not believe in the invisible presence of the Erinyes. In Aeschylus these deities were real beings, living persons, women of flesh and blood, who even came upon the stage to torture the murderer; in Euripides they are nothing more than the visions that haunt the brain of a delirious man.[4]—There are other deities, personifications of moral ideas like the Erinyes, whose reality Euripides likewise refuses to admit. The poets relate that Dikè (Justice) dwells in Olympus, where she points out to the chief of the gods the sins of men that deserve punishment. Euripides in a most piquant way brings out the improbability of such a tradition. One of his characters says:

"Deem ye that sins leap upward unto heaven
On wings—that then on Zeus's tablet-folds
One writeth them—that Zeus beholding them
So judgeth men? Not all the expanse of heaven
If Zeus would write thereon the sins of men
Were wide enough, nor could he, reading there,

[1] *Ion*, 1523 *et seq.* [2] Pausan. i, 28, 6. [3] *Orestes*, 255–259. Cf. 314.
[4] Cf. Jules Girard, *Le Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 3d ed., pp. 401–404.

Send each his punishment. Nay Justice' self
Is here, is somewhere nigh, if thou wilt look."[1]

How far is this novel and entirely terrestrial conception of justice from the ancient and celestial image of Dikè, seated by the side of the throne of Zeus! How has that god been abased and how much less respect does he inspire, if he is no longer the god who chastises!

Euripides is not always content to discard myths with a word or a smile without giving his reasons. There are cases where he wishes to explain the grounds of his incredulity and where he submits the legends to systematic criticism. There is a striking example of this in the *Daughters of Troy*. Among the captives assembled on the shore and ready to follow their victors is Helen, whom Menelaus seeks and whom he destines to death. The unfortunate woman attempts to justify herself: she pleads her cause by recalling the origin of her misfortunes, which began with the judgment of Paris. "Aphrodite," she says, "obtained the prize of beauty only by promising to hand me over to the son of Priam." She adds that it was Aphrodite herself who led Paris to Sparta, into the palace of Menelaus; if she followed the stranger, this is not her fault, but the fault of the goddess whom she merely obeyed.[2] Hecuba, who would have Helen perish, in order that the wrongs of the war may be avenged, answers this argument. She proves that the reasons advanced by Helen are bad, and more particularly does she reject the story of the judgment of Paris, from considerations which it is interesting to quote. She says:

"Why should Goddess Hera yearn
So hotly for the prize of loveliness?
That she might win a mightier lord than Zeus?
Or sought Athena mid the Gods a spouse,
Who of her sire, for hate of marriage, craved
Maidenhood? Charge not Goddesses with folly,
To gloze thy sin: thou cozenest not the wise."[3]

These are the arguments of plain common sense, but they do not lack force. The story of a competition of beauty in which Hera

[1] *Melanippe Bound*, fragm. 506, Nauck.
[2] *Daughters of Troy*, 919–950.
[3] *Daughters of Troy*, 976–982.

and Athena are said to have taken part is, in truth, out of accord with the traditional character of these goddesses. Hecuba likewise criticises the second reason which Helen advances, that of the irresistible action of Aphrodite:

> "And Kypris say'st thou—who but laughs to hear?—
> Came with my son to Menelaus' halls!
> How, could she not in peace have stayed in heaven
> And thee—Amyklae too—to Ilium brought?"

And for this miraculous fact of a divine intervention she substitutes a natural explanation of the fault of Helen:

> "My son in goodlihead had never peer:
> Thou sawest, and thine heart became thy Kypris!
> All folly is to men their Aphrodite:
> Sensual—senseless—consonant they ring!
> Him in barbaric bravery sawest thou
> Gold-glittering, and thy senses were distraught."[1]

These reflections are remarkable. They contain the germ of a whole theory of rationalistic interpretation of polytheism, a theory which was to develop, and which in subsequent times was to disturb sincerely religious men like Plutarch. "Into what an abyss of impiety shall we fall," he cried, "if each deity is for us only a passion, a force, a virtue."[2] This abyss, it is true, was to disappear in time; soon the gods were to be regarded by enlightened minds as mere phantoms created by the imagination of a primitive age. Euripides already shares this feeling, as is shown by his explanation of Helen's love for the beautiful Paris, without the intervention of Aphrodite.

Euripides criticises the fables of mythology not only in the name of common sense, but often also in the name of morality. The lives of the gods and heroes, as described by the poets since Homer, are certainly not always edifying. But we must not forget that these scandals among the gods, which the fathers of the Church used as weapons against pagan beliefs, had been condemned, long before their time, by the Greeks themselves. Xenophanes reproaches Homer and Hesiod very sharply for attributing to the gods actions that are immoral. We shall see that Euripides takes up the same idea and insists on it. When Theseus tries to console

[1] *Daughters of Troy*, 983–992.

[2] Plut. *Amat.* p. 757 c.

Heracles for the murders which he has just committed in an access of insanity, he shows him that

> "No mortal hath escaped misfortune's taint
> Nor God—if minstrel-legends be not false.
> Have they not linked them in unlawful bonds
> Of wedlock, and with chains, to win them thrones,
> Outraged their fathers? In Olympus still
> They dwell, by their transgressions unabashed."[1]

This criticism of Zeus' conduct in chaining his aged father, in order to reign in his stead, is not new; but this is the first time that a poet calls attention to the illicit character of these unions among gods and goddesses who for the most part were brothers and sisters. That, however, is only a family scandal; the gods, it would seem, are more to blame, when they make improper use of their power as gods and of the means which they have at their disposal to seduce mortal women. Greek mythology is full of these stories, which are easily explained. Each state, each city, desired to have a deity as the founder of its race: people therefore imagined that a god had once had intercourse with a nymph of the country, or even with the daughter or wife of an early king, and that from this union there had sprung famous children. The greatest of the dwellers in Olympus, Zeus, was usually the hero of these amorous adventures, which for a long time were judged to be very honorable to the countries in which they had taken place, until austere moralists and unfriendly spirits, like Euripides, concluded to find evil in them. Does not our poet give us to understand that the story of the birth of Heracles, far from seeming wonderful to him, gives him offence, and does he not undertake to avenge poor Amphitryon, when he lets him utter violent invectives against Zeus? "Zeus, mortal though I am, I surpass thee in virtue, thee the powerful god. I did not abandon the children of Heracles; thou didst manage to get into my couch by stealth, to take possession without permission of another man's wife, and thou knowest not how to save those who are dear to thee!"[2] We may reasonably sup-

[1] *Heracles*, 1314 *et seq.*

[2] *Herac.* 339–347. Amphion (new fragments of the *Antiope*, Mahaffy, *Hermathena*, vol. xvii) admonishes Zeus, his father, in a similar manner: "Beware, after having enjoyed the sweets of hymen, of abandoning the children that

pose that Zeus was not treated with greater respect in the lost tragedy of *Alcmena*, about which a vase-painting gives us some information. The discreet complaints also in the *Children of Heracles*, which the wife of Amphitryon utters against her divine lover,[1] contain in mitigated form a cruel reproach for the past. Elsewhere one of Euripides' characters refuses to believe that Zeus assumed the shape of a satyr in order perfidiously to slip into the couch of Antiope,[2] and the chorus of the *Daughters of Troy*[3] severely condemns a scandal of another nature, that of Ganymede.

One of Zeus' sons, Apollo, inherited the evil impulses of his father: he violated a daughter of Erechtheus in Attica. Apollo's intercourse with Creusa, from which sprang the first ancestor of the Ionic race, affords Euripides material for a drama in which the poet has opportunity, while developing and unravelling an interesting intrigue, to demonstrate also the moral unworthiness of a god. In the beginning of the play, Creusa, who rebelled against the love to which she must submit, makes allusion to those audacious adventures of the gods of which women are the victims.[4] At the middle of the action, when she decides to disclose her shame, she cannot find sufficient imprecations wherewith to curse, before Heaven, the "vile suborner" who has made her a mother.[5] Apollo is not only insulted by Creusa, but must also bear the obloquy which his own son heaps upon him. The youthful Ion, who at first could not believe that Apollo had been guilty of so disgraceful an action, is at last convinced, and then with a frank familiarity which is perhaps justified by his rôle of servant of the cult, he does not hesitate to read a lecture to his master, the god:

> "Yet must I plead
> With Phoebus—what ails him? He ravisheth
> Maids, and forsakes: begetteth babes by stealth
> And heeds not, though they die. Do thou not so!
> Being strong, be righteous."[6]

The verses which follow are still more remarkable. The poet—for

thou shalt beget. *That would bring thee little honor;* thou shouldst succor thine own." (Interpretation of H. Weil, *Journ. des Savants*, September, 1891.)

1 *Children of Heracles*, 718, 719. Cf. 869 *et seq.*

2 *Antiope*, fragm. 210.

3 *Daughters of Troy*, 845, 846.

4 *Ion*, 252.

5 *Ion*, 885, 912 *et seq.*, 960.

6 *Ion*, 436 *et seq.*

it is he and not Ion whom we hear—brings out very clearly the contradiction which exists between the conduct of the gods and the laws they have made for men.

> "How were it just then that ye should enact
> For men laws, and yourselves work lawlessness?
> For if—it could not be, yet put it so—
> Ye should pay mulct to men for lawless lust,
> Thou, the Sea-king, and Zeus the lord of heaven,
> Paying for wrongs should make your temples void.
> For, following pleasure past all wisdom's bounds,
> Ye work unrighteousness. Unjust it were
> To call men vile, if we but imitate
> The sins of Gods:—they are vile which teach us this."[1]

What could an advocate of the Olympians have replied to these charges? He might perhaps have said that a god, even when he condescends to fancy a woman dwelling on the earth, remains a god; that the gods have a different nature and live in a different sphere from man; that consequently the laws made for mortals are not made for the Immortals. Whatever we may think of this sophistical distinction, it is nevertheless true that Euripides has pointed out with great force the danger which the scandalous conduct of the gods might have occasioned to public morality if men had had the presumption to justify their own irregular conduct by the precedent of celestial examples.[2]

The fables contained in these accounts, while encouraging the sophistries of vice, gave at the same time a false idea of the deity. To attribute evil of any kind to the deity was repugnant to Euripides. The goddess Artemis, who was worshipped at Brauron, in Attica, and who, according to tradition, came originally from Taurica, had been honored in early times by human sacrifices. The poet makes Iphigeneia herself criticise this barbarous custom; and after seeking the explanation of these bloody usages,

[1] *Ion*, 442–451.

[2] This is the advice that the Unjust Argument gives to Pheidippides, in the *Clouds*, 1079–1081: "If you are caught in adultery, tell the husband that you have done nothing wrong, and justify yourself by the example of Zeus, who likewise allowed himself to be conquered by love and by women." Cf. Plato, *Republic*, iii, p. 391 d–e.—In the *Hippolytus* (451 *et seq.*) the nurse advises Phaedra to yield to her passion, and cites to her the example of Zeus, who sought to possess Semele, and of Eos, who carried off Cephalus.

less in the demands of the goddess than in the character of the inhabitants of Taurica, he ends by saying: "No, I cannot believe that any deity does wrong."[1] This declaration recalls an often quoted fragment of the *Bellerophon:*

"If deeds of shame gods do, no gods are they."[2]

Taking these two passages together we cannot mistake the poet's meaning. If he rejects as improbable or as immoral a certain number of fables of current mythology, he does this not for the vain pleasure of saying something new in criticising generally accepted traditions, but because these fables appear to him to be irreconcilable with a just conception of the deity.

The common people, according to the accounts of the poets, endowed the gods with all the human passions. Euripides neglects no opportunity to show how ridiculous such a conception is. The gods, he says, ought to be wiser than men, and ought not to yield to any of their impulses.[3] Can we imagine that the gods take pleasure, like misers, in heaping up treasures in their temples?[4] Can we believe that a sovereign goddess of heaven is jealous like the lowest of mortal women, and, as a result of this jealousy, relentlessly persecutes humanity in the person of Heracles, her benefactor?[5] Can we conceive of Athena as a capricious goddess, who at the outset would destroy Troy, and then immediately seeks the destruction of the Greeks because Ajax has profaned her temple;[6] or of Apollo as a pitiless god,[7] who condemns Neoptolemus to death when he comes to Delphi to expiate a small offence,—nay, worse still, commands Orestes to commit the very greatest of crimes, and slay his mother? This last tradition above all others rouses the poet's indignation. He does not tire of making Orestes, Electra, Helen, and the Dioscuri themselves repeat

[1] *Iphig. in Taur.* 380–391.

[2] Fragm. 294, Nauck. Socrates (Plato, *Republic*, ii, p. 379 b) says that the deity, since it is in itself good, cannot be the cause of evil. Later Chrysippus says, in the second book of his Περὶ θεῶν, that the deity cannot in reason be the cause of disgraceful actions (Plut. *Mor.* p. 1049 e).

[3] *Hippol.* 120. *Bacch.* 1349.

[4] *Philoct.* fragm. 794.

[5] *Heracles*, 1305–1307.

[6] *Daughters of Troy*, 67, 82–86.

[7] *Andromache*, 1147, where the concluding words of the messenger (1161 *et seq.*) express the thoughts of the poet.

that the god of oracles, he who is called the wise god, was not wise; that he commanded the most unholy thing, the most abominable deed, and that he alone is guilty.[1] Euripides seems to take pleasure in showing the odious part that certain deities play in the affairs of men. Aphrodite, who, because Hippolytus has turned away from her worship, fells with one blow two innocent victims, Phaedra and the son of Theseus, is revolting. Hera, who forces Heracles to butcher his own children, rouses horror.[2] Euripides is generally more disposed to point out the evil which the gods occasion to men, than the good which may be attributed to them. True, the opinion which he expresses on this subject is neither constant nor absolute; that opinion must necessarily vary or be moderated according to the *dramatis personae* and to the dramatic situations. The tragedy of the *Suppliants*, for instance, perhaps the only play in which we find no word of criticism against the Olympians, is replete with respect for the gods. The Athenian Theseus, who in a long optimistic passage[3] extols the benefits that man owes to the deity, there professes a piety even more complete than that of the Argive Adrastus, who believes that humanity is in close dependence upon Zeus.[4] Again, the deities who intervene in the dénouement of the dramas of Euripides are helpful and good; there are even some, like the Dioscuri, who are moved by pity of human misfortunes.[5] But these concessions to commonly accepted ideas do not prevent the poet from often expressing his personal view, nor from earnestly reproaching the gods for their callous indifference and for their baneful egotism. It is they who, in order to remedy the excess of population on the earth, have wrought the destruction of thousands of men by bringing about the Trojan War;[6] it is they who, because a rite has not been properly observed, wreck

[1] *Orestes*, 28, 76, 162, 285, 416, 595, 1245, 1302.

[2] *Heracles*, 829. Hera at least has her reasons, but we wonder why Iris, the messenger of the gods, shares Hera's hatred and takes part in her vengeance (832).

[3] *Suppliants*, 196–218.

[4] *Suppl.* 734 *et seq.* Of the same order of ideas is a fragment (254) of the *Archelaus:* "It is an easy matter to accuse the gods;" and another of the *Peliades* (606), where it is said that the gods are not unjust, but that confusion reigns in human affairs.

[5] *Electra*, 1327 *et seq.*

[6] *Helen*, 38–40. *Orestes*, 1640–1642. Plut. *De Stoic. repugn.* 32, 2. Cf. Euripides, fragm. incert. 1082, Nauck.

a life;[1] it is they who here below spread trouble broadcast and sow disorder, in order that they may be better worshipped by ignorant and terrified men.[2] To denounce the immoral conduct of the Olympians, to point out casually, but by means of allusions that are frequent and attacks that are repeated, their unjust and cruel acts—was that not making the gravest assault upon the beliefs of the masses?

A radical denial of the gods, dangerous in any part of Athens, would not have been possible in the theatre. Only Bellerophon has the audacity to say that there are no gods in heaven. But Bellerophon plays his traditional rôle of a godless man when he uses this language, which it would have been easy for the poet to disavow. Ordinarily Euripides reveals his opinion about the popular gods indirectly and in the guise of a doubt. One of the most effective arguments in every age by which to shake the faith of the common people is the inequality—often cruel—of the distribution of blessings and evils among men. If the righteous man is not treated better in this life than the wicked man, if it even happens that some wicked men are more happy than others that are righteous,[3] what must we think of the gods? Are we not tempted to believe that they are losing control of the government of the world? In view of the course of human affairs, it seems in fact to several of Euripides' characters that the world is not governed at all, and the spectacle of injustice triumphing over justice leads them to ask if it be truly the deity, and not chance, that guides all.[4] Talthybius says:

> "What shall I say, Zeus?—that thou look'st on men?
> Or that this fancy false we vainly hold
> For nought, who deem there is a race of Gods,
> While chance controlleth all things among men?"[5]

The alternative proposed is merely a trick of speech which thinly

[1] *Iphig. at Aul.* 24, 25.

[2] *Hecuba*, 958–960.

[3] *Bellerophon*, fragm. 286, Nauck, verses 8, 9. Cf. *Electra*, 583, 584; *Phrixus*, fragm. 832; *Oenom.* fragm. 577; fragm. incert. 900, 901.

[4] Eurip. ap. Athenag. p. 28. Cf. *Daughters of Troy*, 1077.

[5] *Hecuba*, 488–491. The chorus of the *Hippolytus*, 1105 *et seq.*, says: "I have deep in my heart the hope of divine wisdom; but I know not what to think of the spectacle of the lot of mortals."

disguises the poet's intention: by bringing out, here and elsewhere, the contradiction which so often exists between the lot of man and his deserts, he desires to lead the masses to think that it is not to their interest to honor gods who are either so unjust or so removed from humanity, and who so ill deserve the incense and the sacrifices that are offered to them. Moreover, who are these divine beings, and what can one know about them? "We are the slaves of the gods, *whoever the gods may be*," says Orestes,[1] who seems to come from the school of Protagoras. The women of the chorus of the *Helen*, who manifest a very critical spirit, when we consider their sex and their condition, put the question thus:

> "Who among men dare say that he, exploring
> Even to Creation's farthest limit-line,
> Ever hath found the God of our adoring,
> That which is not God, or the half-divine?"[2]

In other words, wherein does the nature of the gods differ from that of the heroes[3] and that of men? These distinctions, which the ancient poets marked very clearly, Euripides wishes his contemporaries to regard no longer; it is not for the purpose of fortifying religious faith, evidently, that he lets the gods hover in uncertainty and envelops their being in mystery.

Are these theological doubts directed against the chief god of the Hellenic religion, Zeus? The heroic persons in Euripides do not always express themselves in the same way regarding the chief of the gods. Sometimes they content themselves with saying casually and by way of parenthesis that one does not know what he is. Heracles, who as a demigod and future dweller in Olympus ought to be informed about his celestial father, affects a singular ignorance on this point. "Zeus," he says,—"whoever Zeus may be,—begat me that I might be the object of Hera's hatred."[4] The bold phrase ὅστις ὁ Ζεύς was also found in the first verse of *Melanippe the Philosopher*, where it was accompanied with a serious comment:

[1] *Orestes*, 418. [2] *Helen*, 1137 *et seq.*

[3] It is thus that the expression τὸ μέσον must be understood. Cf. Nägelsbach, *Die nachhomer. Theologie*, p. 104.

[4] *Heracles*, 1263, Nauck. It is in another sense that in Aeschylus the chorus of the *Agamemnon*, in speaking of Zeus, uses the formula ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν (160, H. Weil).

"Zeus—whoso Zeus is: this I know not, save
By hearsay."[1]

That such a declaration should have met with a bad reception from the public need not surprise us. Plutarch relates—and we readily believe him—that this opening of the *Melanippe* raised such a storm in the theatre that the poet, compelled to give satisfaction to the public before his play could be repeated, subsequently replaced this sceptical verse by another whose dogmatical exaggeration was not without irony: "Zeus, as the truth proclaims, was the father of Helen."[2] The tone of this recantation, made necessary by circumstances, is an additional indirect evidence of the poet's state of mind.

Euripides does not always limit himself to this vague kind of scepticism: he gives us a glimpse also of what he thinks, or what might be thought, of the nature of Zeus, whom he seems at certain times to confound with the ether (*αἰθήρ*). When Aristophanes, in the *Frogs*,[3] has Euripides offer a prayer which begins thus: "Ether, thou who art my nourishment," he makes use of his privilege as a comic poet. The word *αἰθήρ* is, in fact, one that recurs often in the language of Euripides, and sometimes with a philosophical meaning. In the beginning of his book on *Nature* Anaxagoras had said that the air and the ether, both of them infinite, in the beginning contained everything. This distinction between the air and the ether, or in other words between the atmosphere of the lower regions and that of the higher regions of the earth, is again found in Aristophanes, in the words of Socrates, who invokes as gods "the Air without limit and the shining Ether."[4] It has disappeared in Euripides, who speaks of the ether only, but who attaches a special meaning to this word, which it is necessary to state precisely. Homer had long before represented the sovereign of the gods as dwelling in the bosom of the ether.[5] Euripides, when expressing traditional ideas, employs analogous images. He shows us Zeus enthroned on his ce-

[1] *Melan.* fragm. 480. [2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 756 b.

[3] Verse 892. Cf. 1352. The Clouds also, in order to ridicule the importance attributed to the ether by Euripides and by the philosophers, invoke as their father "the very august Ether." Cf. the observation of the scholiast on verse 892 of the *Frogs*. [4] *Clouds*, 264, 265. [5] *Iliad*, ii, 412, *αἰθέρι ναίων*.

lestial seat and "on the ether."[1] A person in a tragedy whose name is unknown said that "if he had wings, he would take flight to the highest regions of the ether in order to approach Zeus,"[2] and Aristophanes parodies a verse of the *Melanippe* when he makes the ether "the chamber of Zeus."[3] But when Euripides philosophizes, he uses very different language. We very soon perceive that, for him, the dweller in the ether is confounded with his dwelling, that the ether and Zeus are one. This is demonstrated by the most formal evidence. We read in a fragment:

> "Maiden, 't was Aether gave thee birth,
> Who is named Zeus by sons of earth."[4]

—According to Euripides the supreme god is the transparent ether which envelops the earth, says Cornutus,[5] who is thinking no doubt of the beautiful verses translated by Cicero:

> "Seest thou the boundless ether there on high
> That folds the earth around with dewy arms?
> This deem thou Zeus, this reckon one with God."[6]

Thus Euripides robs Zeus of his divine personality and sees in him nought but an appellation of the ether,[7] and thereby transforms him into an essential element of nature. Such, in fact, is the rôle which is given him in a fragment of the *Chrysippus*, already cited, in which all creatures are represented as owing their birth to the union of two principles, one of which is the Earth, the other "the Ether of Zeus;"[8] that is,—as Euripides has been careful to explain elsewhere,—the ether, a physical element, to which men give the name of Zeus.

If by the ether Euripides had simply meant the air of the

[1] *Daughters of Troy*, 1077–1079.

[2] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* iv, 642 (fragm. 911, Nauck).

[3] Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 100.

[4] Fragm. 877.

[5] *De Nat. Deor.* xx, p. 104, Osann. (184, Gale).

[6] Fragm. 941. Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* ii, 25, 65.

[7] Democritus gave the identification of Zeus with the air as the opinion of "some wise men." That does not prove that it was his personal opinion; but it seems to indicate that at that time this interpretation of the nature of Zeus was not peculiar to Euripides. Indeed, Diogenes of Apollonia identified the air with Zeus (Philodemus, περὶ εὐσεβείας, i, 6, 8). The comedians took it up, as we see by fragment 84 of Philemon.

[8] Fragm. 839, 1.

higher regions and the sky which shines over the heads of men,[1] his interpretation of the nature of Zeus would have been in no wise offensive. Certain peculiarities of the Hellenic tongue prove that the god of heaven was sometimes confounded in the minds of his worshippers with heaven itself. The Greeks said: Ζεὺς ὕει, "Zeus rains;" Homer had previously said, "The snow falls from Zeus."[2] These popular confusions may have justified, in a certain degree, the one which Euripides intentionally brought about. But it is quite certain that in his eyes the ether identified with Zeus is not merely the sky, and that with him the word has a broader meaning. In fact, the ether of Euripides is nothing else than the infinite air, which, according to the doctrine of Anaximenes, reproduced by Anaxagoras and by Democritus,[3] envelops the earth on all sides, covers it and upholds it. But with this precise conception there is mingled another that is vaguer in a curious passage of the *Daughters of Troy*, which shows how vacillating Euripides' opinion on this subject was, and how much difficulty he experienced in defining the mysterious power whose effect upon man and in nature he recognized. This passage is a prayer — the prayer of a philosopher, not of a devotee — placed by the poet in the mouth of Hecuba:

> "O Earth's upbearer, thou whose throne is Earth,
> Whoe'er thou be, O past our finding out,
> Zeus, be thou Nature's law, or mind of man,
> To thee I pray; for, treading soundless paths,
> In justice dost thou guide all mortal things."[4]

Menelaus has good cause for astonishment at this prayer: it was of a new kind, and Zeus had never heard its like. What do we find in it, in fact? At the outset the poet's customary identification of Zeus with the ether; then, alternative hypotheses: according to the first, the deity, which the common people in ignorance of its nature call Zeus and which the poet philosopher seeks to define, would consist of all the necessary and immutable laws of nature, or in a word would be that Anagkè

[1] This is the meaning which the word has in an epigram of Euripides quoted by Athenaeus, ii, p. 61 b.

[2] *Iliad*, xix, 357.

[3] Arist. *De Coel.* ii, 13. Plut. *Mor.* p. 896 e.

[4] *Daughters of Troy*, 884 *et seq.*

of which he says elsewhere that "above it there is nothing."[1] According to the second hypothesis, the deity would be νοῦς βροτῶν, the intelligence of men. Cicero has pointed out the boldness of this latter supposition, which in other tragedies, that are lost,[2] doubtless became a categorical affirmation. "Intelligence," he says, "to my mind is divine: Euripides dares to say that it is god."[3] One can hardly imagine bolder language. The two hypotheses, between which the poet appears to waver, actually eliminate, not only the many gods that the popular imagination dreamed of, but even the personality of a single deity, however high. These conceptions are replaced by that of a power—if the word does not occur in Euripides, he expresses the idea—of an unknown power, inscrutable in its essence, but one that manifests itself in two aspects: that of the laws of nature, that of human intelligence. Has not Euripides elsewhere given us to understand by implication that deities exist only by virtue of the law, that the tradition of the human race is all that is real about them?[4] It is passages of this kind, and perhaps others which are now lost, that Aristophanes had in view when he accused Euripides of desiring to persuade men that there are no gods.[5]

The conclusion which we have reached seems to be contradicted by the tragedy of the *Bacchanals*, in which the aged Tiresias makes the following reflection:

> "Traditions of our fathers, old as time,
> We hold: no reasoning shall cast them down,—
> No, though of subtlest wit our wisdom spring."[6]

"It is not wisdom," says the chorus, "to play the wise man and to think otherwise than is permissible for mortals."

[1] *Alcestis*, 965. Cf. *Helen*, 513, 514, where Menelaus says: "There is nothing stronger than necessity," and warns us that it is not he who speaks, but *the wise*.

[2] Eurip. ap. Schol. Pind. *Nem.* vi, 7.

[3] *Tuscul.* i, 26, 65. This was the doctrine of Democritus. Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* i, 12: "Democritus in deorum numero refert . . . tum scientiam, *intelligentiamque nostram*."

[4] *Hecuba*, 799, 800. See M. H. Weil's comment on these verses.

[5] *Thesmoph.* 451. Euripides had the reputation of impiety for a long time. The pseudo-Plutarch (*De placit. philos.* i, 7, 2), who quotes the poet, together with Diagoras, Theodorus of Cyrene and Euhemerus, maintains that fear of the Areopagus alone kept him from openly declaring his atheism.

[6] *Bacch.* 201–203.

"Wisely shalt thou from the over-wise
Hold thee apart: but the faith of the heart
Of the people, that lives in the works of the mart,
For me shall suffice."[1]

These passages have led to the statement that in the *Bacchanals* Euripides has condemned philosophical investigations and has disavowed his entire past, in order to profess orthodoxy.[2] The poet, grown old, tired of life, disenchanted with science, is said to have taken refuge in religion as in a haven after the storm; the *Bacchanals*, a sacred tragedy, is said to be the record of the conversion of this great soul. It is hard for us to share this view. Doubtless, the principal characters of the drama, Cadmus, Tiresias, Agavè, are possessed with the Bacchic enthusiasm, and in their mystical intoxication preach absolute faith, blind faith, in the new god. But side by side with religious exaltation, which, it is true, is dominant, there is room in the play for common sense and for reason. The poet has placed a strong nature in opposition to the worshippers of Dionysus, in the person of Pentheus, who overwhelms the new cult with his sarcasms. As he comes upon the stage he says:

"It chanced that, sojourning without this land,
I heard of strange misdeeds in this my town,
How from their homes our women have gone forth
Feigning a Bacchic rapture, and rove wild
O'er wooded hills, in dances honouring
Dionysus, this new God—whoe'er he be. . . .
In pretext Maenad priestesses, forsooth,
But honouring Aphrodite more than Bacchus."[3]

A little farther on, Tiresias seeks to explain by a play on words, by a fanciful etymology, the legend of the birth of Dionysus sewed into the thigh of Zeus.[4] There is especially a most interesting scene in which Euripides has conceived the idea of placing Pentheus face to face with Dionysus, who has taken the form of one of the priests,—of placing the infidel before the god.[5] Pentheus' incredulity is persistent: the story which is told him of the mira-

[1] *Bacch.* 395, 396, 427 *et seq.* [2] Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. i, p. 46.
[3] *Bacch.* 215–225. Cf., in 487, the insinuations regarding the moral dangers of night festivals. [4] *Bacch.* 292–297. [5] *Bacch.* 451–518.

cles wrought by the Bacchanals does not affect him, and in the transports of the god's adorers he sees nothing but a distemper, merely insanity. Pentheus, it is true, meets with a bad end. Hemmed in, like a deer, by the Theban women, he is torn to pieces by the hands of his own mother, Agavè, who in her raging insanity takes him for a young lion. But this catastrophe of the drama was the termination of the legend itself, from which it would have been difficult for the poet to deviate. We must not leap to the conclusion that Euripides wished either to take sides against Pentheus, or to approve the vengeance of the god. When Agavè returns to her senses, she is horrified by what she has done, and reproaches Dionysus with the heinous crime to which he had forced her. "It is because you did despite to a god," says Dionysus; and Agavè with a note of independence which betrays Euripides answers him: "Gods should not have the same passions as men."[1] Thus in the *Bacchanals*, as sometimes elsewhere, the poet has made his characters plead two contradictory causes, that of mysticism and that of reason. It is the cause of mysticism which is developed at the greater length and with the greater force. The worship of Dionysus offered Euripides a fount of original beauty into which he could not fail to dip: he therefore, with rare versatility and with entire freedom, entered as far as possible into the spirit of the worshippers of the god. But if the poet in him became enthusiastic over the Dionysiac religion, the philosopher in him secretly shared the views of Pentheus. At all events it is not by any means demonstrated that Euripides, toward the end of his life, thought of professing Bacchic mysticism.

Furthermore we do not find that he was ever attracted by the Orphic sect, though it had many devotees in his day. The age in which Euripides lived is at one and the same time the age of the most daring criticism, of the boldest denials, and of the most active religious feeling. This activity almost becomes disquietude. As the common religion was no longer adequate to satisfy the intense desire for worship by which many souls were then possessed, people left the clear light of public ceremonial to hasten into the shade of mystical rites. What a delight for the pious to

[1] Verses 1347, 1348. Cf. in the *Hippolytus* (120) the philosophical remark of the attendant: "The gods must be wiser than men."

be able to frequent a small, privileged sanctuary beside the public temple; to withdraw from the vulgar herd and to become members of an elect band, to attend secret ceremonies, and thus by practices unknown to the masses achieve exceptional virtue! The vision of another life, the terrors of hell, haunted their imagination, eager for new wonders. In order to propitiate the deities of the nether world, who were regarded as formidable, the mysteries of the Great Goddesses of Eleusis did not suffice: people were eager to be initiated in the Orphic mysteries of Dionysus.

Was Euripides in favor of these pious innovations? It would be difficult to affirm this, in reliance upon the fragments of the chorus which a band of "prophets"[1] of the Zeus of Ida sang in the tragedy of the *Cretans*. Although these men are there represented as following a mode of life analogous to that of the Orphic sect,—since they abstain from eating the flesh of animals,—they seem to have been connected only with the mystical cult of the Idean Zeus, which was associated with that of the Mother of the gods and with that of Zagreus, the Cretan Dionysus.[2]

In the extant tragedies, there are but two very short passages which refer to the Orphic sect, and these passages are not laudatory. The leader of the chorus of the *Alcestis* speaks with quite philosophical contempt of the works which circulated under the name of the legendary founder of the sect. The speaker has devoted himself to the study of the words of the wise, but says he has found no remedy against the sovereign force of necessity "in the Thracian tablets on which are written the words of Orpheus."[3] The passage in the *Hippolytus* is more formal. Theseus is indignant at the mummery of the sect and at the vanity of their sacred books. He says to Hippolytus:

> "Now vaunt, ay now!—set out thy paltry wares
> Of lifeless food: take Orpheus for thy king:
> Rave, worship vapourings of many a scroll:
> For ah, thou'rt caught! I warn all men to shun
> Such hypocrites as this; for they hunt souls
> With canting words, the while they plot foul sin."[4]

[1] Porph. *De Abstin.* 4, 19. See verse 4 of the fragment.
[2] Fragm. 472, Nauck. On the Cretan Dionysus, cf. Diod. v, 75, 4.
[3] *Alcestis*, 964–969.
[4] *Hippol.* 952–957.

The devotees of Orpheus are here exposed, with an unmistakable purpose, as hypocrites who hide their vices under an outward semblance of extraordinary piety. The objection may be raised that Hippolytus, against whom Theseus flings these taunts, is here represented as one of these. But Hippolytus is a follower of Orpheus in this passage only, for an instant, as the result of a passing notion of the poet, but in no other part of the drama. It is not Dionysus that he recognizes and proclaims as his god. His special deity, the exclusive object of his passionate worship, is Artemis, the chaste goddess, whose purity enchants him, mystic intercourse with whom fills his soul with celestial delight. Orpheus counts for nothing in this young man's devotion. We must therefore admit that Theseus, or more accurately the poet, merely took incidental advantage of Hippolytus' singular piety to compare him with a devotee of Orpheus,—that is, with a man who makes a display of religion, but who at heart is no better than the common man from whom he pretends to differ.

III

SOOTHSAYING AND SOOTHSAYERS
THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM
THE SANCTITY OF THE OATH

The followers of Orpheus counted in their ranks more dupes than charlatans. We cannot say so much of another class of people whom Euripides has attacked vigorously,—and not without courage, for they enjoyed great credit at that time,—the soothsayers. Belief in soothsaying was particularly strong in Greece in the times when people had the greatest interest in ascertaining the will of the gods, in the hours of political crisis and of national peril. During the Peloponnesian War hundreds of oracles were circulated, and swarms of soothsayers offered to expound them. Unfortunately, neither the oracles nor their interpreters were in accord. At Athens, during the deliberations regarding the Sicilian expedition, people were so uncertain about the future the gods held in store for that undertaking that Alcibiades, clever man that he was, took care to have an oracle of

Zeus Ammon come from afar,—from the depths of the Libyan deserts,—which, when properly understood, was favorable to his plans. This exotic oracle had considerable prestige: it helped to keep alive in the hearts of the people the hopes with which it was necessary to cheer them. In the time of Euripides, then, oracles play an important part in the politics of Athens, as well as in the affairs of individuals. The soothsayers, who make their livelihood by them, are, it is true, so numerous that all do not make a fortune at the business. Some of them are poor devils, like Thumantis and Hierocles, at whom Aristophanes rails.[1] But such as they are bunglers who disgrace their profession. As a rule the soothsayers are sedate and respected people, whom one does not make fun of.[2] They have a powerful protector and a faithful client in Nicias. This man, whom the gods kept in such a state of terror that he offered them a sacrifice every day, had a soothsayer by the name of Stilbides attached to his person, and he found it convenient to have him lodge in his house, in order that he might always have him at hand.[3] But Nicias was like those persons who have a regular physician whose advice they ordinarily follow, but are too anxious about their health not at the same time to take advantage of consultations. When Stilbides' information seemed to him to be inadequate, he went among the soothsayer's colleagues, to try theirs. As long as Nicias lived the soothsayer's profession was quite a lucrative one at Athens. Not less well known than Stilbides was that Euthyphro after whom one of Plato's dialogues is named, and who is one of the interlocutors in the *Cratylus;* he was one of the followers of Socrates, who was fond of talking with him and esteemed him very highly. Need we be surprised at this sympathetic relation? The philosopher who listened to the voice of his own peculiar oracle which he carried about within him was a soothsayer after his own fashion.

Was Euripides, who associated with Socrates, as tolerant of soothsaying as the latter? If a comparison is to be made, it would apparently be more to the point to compare him with Anaxagoras

[1] *Knights*, 1269. *Peace*, 1046.

[2] About the soothsayers in the century of Pericles, see Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité*, vol. ii, p. 82 *et seq.*

[3] Plut. *Nicias*, 4, 2; 23, 7.

than with Socrates. That philosopher has certainly nowhere expressed a formal opinion about the art of the soothsayers, but what he thought of it may be inferred from the fundamental principle of his doctrine. *Nous*, which merely gave the initial impulse to the atoms when in confusion in chaos, and then left to itself the world which it had regulated by motion, is not a Providence. Now if we eliminate from human affairs the idea of a Providence, we eliminate at the same time the possibility of the art of soothsaying. An anecdote related by Plutarch,[1] moreover, shows us how much faith Anaxagoras had in the interpretations of the soothsayers. One day there was brought to Pericles from a farm of his in the country the head of a ram which had a single horn in the middle of its forehead. The soothsayer Lampon was called in to expound this prodigy, and promptly found the meaning: this phenomenon plainly portended that all the powers of the city were to be concentrated on a single head, that of Pericles. Anaxagoras, who was present, was less flattering or less prophetic: being a man of science, he had the skull of the animal opened, and found that the brain, instead of filling the whole cavity, had taken the shape of an egg whose apex was turned toward the root of the single horn; and he pointed out that it was for this reason that the ram did not have two horns. Those who were present, says Plutarch, greatly admired the knowledge of Anaxagoras; but some time afterward, when Pericles became the sole and uncontested head of Athens, admiration passed to the soothsayer Lampon.

Our knowledge of Euripides would justify us in affirming, even if we had no positive proof, that he was no more the dupe of the soothsayers than was Anaxagoras. But evidence is not lacking, for the poet has not concealed his views on this subject. Only one character among his *dramatis personae* speaks favorably of soothsaying,—Theseus in the *Suppliants*.[2] But it was necessary that the piety of Theseus, his respect for the gods and for their oracles, should be contrasted with the impiety of Adrastus, who did not heed the counsels of Amphiaraus and who departed despite the gods. In defending soothsaying Theseus merely plays

[1] *Pericles*, vi, 2.

[2] *Suppliants*, 155–159. Cf. 211–213.

the part that is forced upon him by the character of Adrastus, which is the opposite of his own: Theseus is not the medium of the poet's thought. That thought is evident in many passages. The various means which men employed to learn the will of the gods appear to Euripides to be wholly ridiculous. Ion says:

> "For lo, what heights of folly should we reach
> If in the Gods' despite we wrest their will,
> By sacrifice of sheep on altars, or
> By flight of birds, to tell what they would veil."[1]

Hippolytus, driven from Attica by Theseus, complains that he has been exiled without a trial, without proof of the crime of which he is accused, and without consultation of the soothsayers. Theseus replies that the tablet which he holds in his hand is sufficient proof, that he has no need to seek for soothsayers' utterances; and he adds, with no respect for the art of ornithomancy: "As regards the birds that fly over my head, I do not care that for them."[2] Those who make a business of interpreting the flight of birds and other signs of the divine will are of the sort for whom Euripides feels no respect. In the *Phoenician Maidens*, it is true, he has given a sort of dignity and nobility to the legendary prophet of Thebes, the aged Tiresias; but it is because the prophecies of Tiresias play an important part in the action of the drama. Sent for by Creon, the soothsayer tells him that Thebes is lost unless he is willing to apply to this desperate situation the only remedy that remains,—a cruel remedy, whose secret he finally divulges when pressed with questions. To save the city of Cadmus, Créon must sacrifice his own son, he must slay Menoeceus. The king of Thebes thus finds himself confronted by the alternative of seeing his son or his country perish. This situation is due solely to the intervention of Tiresias, and we can understand that Euripides was unwilling to miss the pathos of such a scene, and that he faithfully reproduced the character attributed to the Theban prophet by tradition. But at the moment when Tiresias leaves the stage, the poet attributes to him reflections which surpass the limits of his rôle. For he declares to the audience that soothsayers find themselves in a false position, that they dare not tell the truth to their

[1] *Ion*, 374 *et seq.*

[2] *Hippol.* 1058, 1059. Cf. *Electra*, 400.

clients if the truth is baneful, and that as a consequence they are obliged in their own interest to cheat those who consult them in order not to give offence.[1]

Elsewhere Euripides has expressed himself more fully about this "ambitious breed" of soothsayers, which is a pest, "a plague."[2] In the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* Achilles asks: "What is a soothsayer?" and he himself answers: "A man who mingles with many lies a few truths which chance has furnished him — in this case we admire him. If chance has served him ill, we hear him spoken of no more."[3] Euripides does not fear to declare aloud that the pretended knowledge of these men is a delusive knowledge. How do they dare to swear that they read clearly the thoughts of the gods? That is not a knowledge which is within the reach of man. Whoever pretends to know the divine knows but one thing,— how to deceive people by his talk.[4] The art of soothsaying is therefore a lying art, and those who practise it—Euripides tells them this in the speech of the messenger in the *Helen*—are impostors:

> "But the lore of seers,
> How vain it is I see, how full of lies.
> So then the altar-flames were utter naught,
> The voices of winged things! Sheer folly this
> Even to dream that birds may help mankind. . . .
> Why seek we then to seers? With sacrifice
> To Gods, ask good, and let soothsayings be.
> They were but as a bait for greed devised:
> None idle getteth wealth through divination.
> Sound wit, with prudence, is the seer of seers."[5]

Here we have a categorical statement. Euripides had no patience whatever with the men who lived on the credulity of the public, many of whom doubtless had had a baneful influence on the Sicilian expedition, which had ended so disastrously a few months before.[6]

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 954–959. Sophocles too attacked the soothsayers: *Antig.* 1037 *et seq.*, 1055; *Oedip. Rex*, 500–502.

[2] *Iphig. at Aul.* 520. [3] *Iphig. at Aul.* 956–958. Cf. *Iphig. in Taur.* 574, 575.

[4] *Philoct.* fragm. 795, Nauck. [5] *Helen*, 744–757.

[6] The tragedy of *Helen* was played in 412. — Aristophanes also did not spare the soothsayers. See the scene in the *Birds* (959–991) where the impudent soothsayer who invents oracles in order to beg clothes and to claim his part of the sacrifice is ignominiously driven out of Nephelococcygia by Peithetaerus.

Nor could he forget the soothsayer Diopeithes and his dangerous fanaticism.[1]

The poet fought against all the forms of wrong-doing which shield themselves under the mantle of religion. He criticised the abuses of the right of asylum that existed in his day. That right certainly was a humane and generous custom which prevented many deeds of violence and hindered more than one crime. It was well that the slave when maltreated by his master, the accused when unjustly pursued, the vanquished foe, should find safe refuge at the foot of the altars of the gods. Xenophon and Plutarch relate that after the battle of Coronea, in which the Athenians and their allies were defeated by Agesilaus, a band of fugitives withdrew into the sanctuary of Athena Itonia. Agesilaus did not for a moment think of forcibly removing them. Not only did he grant them their lives, but he also gave them a detachment of cavalry as escort.[2] Thus the respect which the inviolability of the sanctuaries inspired often had good results. But it also happened that this custom arrested the course of the most legitimate justice. There were some temples where right of ἀσυλία was absolute, and where the greatest criminals, men who had justly been condemned to death, escaped all punishment so long as they remained in the consecrated enclosure. Euripides, in opposition to current opinion, does not admit that a wrong-doer should escape the expiation of his crime by placing himself under the protection of the gods.

> "When an unrighteous man takes sanctuary
> At the altar, I would set at naught the law,
> And, fearless of the Gods, to justice hale him.
> Yea, evil men should ever suffer evil."[3]

He would not have refuge in the temples open to all indiscriminately; only the innocent should profit by it. Ion says:

> "Never should crime have altar-sanctuary,
> But hounding thence. Unmeet is it that hands
> Sin-stained should touch the Gods: but righteous men,
> Whoso is wronged, should claim their sanctuary,

[1] Plut. *Pericles*, xxxii, 2.
[2] Xen. *Hellen.* iv, 3, 20; *Agesil.* xi, 1. Plut. *Agesil.* xix, 2.
[3] Fragm. 1036, Nauck.

> And not the good and evil come alike
> Hither to win the same boon of the Gods."[1]

Perhaps these verses refer to some recent scandal; perhaps the poet merely wishes to call the attention of his contemporaries to the imperfections of a traditional usage, of which furthermore the application was not constant and the legitimacy was contested.[2]

He displays greater hardihood in expressing doubt as to the sanctity of oaths. In Greece, as among the ancients generally, respect for the word of an oath was one of the fundamental tenets of human society. The oath, regarded as a divine institution, had a sacred character. When the formula had been pronounced, when the gods had been called to witness, one's obligation was absolute. In earlier times this obligation was considered so strong that it was said to bind the gods themselves.[3] The Greeks, nourished on ideas like these, must then have been scandalized when they heard in the theatre that the sacred formula was not always binding, and that oaths might be discriminated according to the circumstances under which they were made. There are, according to Euripides, forced oaths made under constraint; there are imprudent oaths, by which one has bound one's self although unable to keep one's word. But the deity, he adds, is not blind: he well knows how to distinguish those which are valid from those which are not.[4] Invalid is the oath which was sworn to Tyndareus by the suitors for Helen's hand, and that which Hippolytus swore to the nurse of Phaedra. We recall the celebrated verse:

"ἡ γλῶσσ' ὁμώμοχ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος,"[5]

for which Aristophanes was not the only one to blame Euripides.[6] He had to justify himself for this verse before the committee in charge of the Dionysiac contest; and later, in the suit which Hygiaenon instituted against him, it brought upon him the charge of

[1] *Ion*, 1312–1319.

[2] On this subject see Caillemer, article "Asylia" in the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités*, edited by M. Saglio.

[3] According to the *Theogony*, 793–798, the Olympian god who has perjured himself "remains inanimate during an entire year. Never do ambrosia or nectar near his lips; his voice is without breath; he lies on his couch, overcome by a deep sleep." [4] *Iphig. at Aul.* 394, 395. [5] *Hippol.* 612.

[6] *Acharn.* 398, 399. *Thesm.* 275, 276. *Frogs*, 102, 1471.

impiety on the ground that he had advised men to commit perjury.[1] If, however, this verse is interpreted in its context, it is easily explained. Phaedra's nurse, before she informs Hippolytus of the passion which Phaedra has conceived for him, makes the young man promise not to reveal the secret she is about to communicate to him. Hippolytus swears, imprudently, in ignorance of the nature of the revelation. But when he learns this terrible secret, he is no longer master of himself, and is tempted to go and tell all to his father. When the nurse reminds him of his oath, he says: "That is an oath my lips have sworn; no oath is on my soul." Nevertheless, he considers himself bound by his imprudence, and will keep silence;[2] thus the sanctity of the oath, called into question for a moment, is to triumph in the end. And yet we must recognize that the distinction made by Hippolytus between the lips that pronounce the formula of the oath and the mind which does or does not acquiesce in the words pronounced by them was an alarming distinction,—that this verse, short and concise as it is, might become a dangerous maxim.[3] What then was Euripides' purpose? He certainly did not intend to imperil the respect due to oaths, to subvert faithful adherence to the sworn word. In this matter, as in many others, he simply attacked a narrow and unintelligent formalism; he tried to make distinctions and shades of difference clear to the too dogmatic minds of common people; he attempted to rouse reflection about the value of certain usages which previously had been observed blindly and without discrimination; in a word he here did what he did frequently and sometimes ill advisedly in his dramas,—he assumed the rôle of the critic.

[1] Arist. *Rhet.* iii, xv.

[2] Cf. 656–658, 1060 *et seq.*

[3] This verse shocked people especially by its form, which places the idea in such bold relief. At the performance of Sophocles' *Electra* the audience did not become indignant when it heard Orestes (47) ask his pedagogue to make a false oath. It is true that a god had recommended the ruse.

CHAPTER III

EURIPIDES' PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

I

THE POET'S PESSIMISTIC IDEAS ABOUT LIFE AND MAN'S ESTATE

THE inquiries which we are making in regard to the personal opinions of Euripides lead us to ask what he thought about human life. We are well aware how much care such an investigation demands. In gathering together for purposes of coördination the philosophical ideas found here and there in the poet's dramas, we must avoid giving them even the semblance of a system. Our task is not artificially to reconstruct from Euripides' plays a body of doctrines, but simply to learn what were his dominant ideas on the subject of man and of life,—ideas which he has expressed more than once, which he develops with pleasure, and which apparently he was inclined to accept. We should wrong a dramatic poet were we to transform him into a logician or into a professor of ethics; it would be unfair to him were we to consider him as a pure sophist, for whom ideas have no intrinsic value, and who maintains, as occasion demands, according to the requirements of his plays or because of a versatile imagination, the most divergent theses. We shall endeavor to show that there is found in Euripides a fixed stock of philosophical ideas, of which the part that is his own is not always distinguishable from the part that belongs to his time and to tradition, but in which, notwithstanding inevitable diversities of view, we meet with neither disorder nor caprice.

Pessimism is one of the essential characteristics of Euripides' philosophy. Perhaps this word calls for some explanation. Men sometimes seem to think that pessimism is a malady peculiar to our century. Leopardi is said to have sown its first seeds, and the contagion is supposed to have been spread by the learning of Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann. Another generally accepted view represents the Greeks of early days as a people optimistic by nature, whose life, full of movement and brightness, was

nothing less than a perpetual enchantment; as big children who devoted themselves entirely to the happiness of living, displaying in a free air, under a luminous sky, the agile vigor of their muscles and the healthy joy of their souls. This second view, expressed in such general terms, is no more accurate than the first. From the time of the Homeric poems, the Greeks were conscious of their unhappiness. Men bent their heads under the yoke of an irresistible and relentless power,—*Moira*, or Destiny,—and knew besides that they were in the hands of capricious gods, who sent them now ill luck, now good luck,—more often ill than good. Pain is one of the laws of their existence. "The gods," says the poet, "have imposed this destiny upon unhappy mortals—to live in pain, while they themselves are exempt from suffering."[1] He also tells us that "of all the creatures that breathe and creep on the surface of the earth, none is more to be pitied than man."[2] If indeed mortals have some rare moments of happiness, they must buy them at the cost of suffering: for them good is offset by evil. This law of compensation is expressed in Homer principally in the words which, at the end of the *Iliad*, Achilles addresses to the aged Priam, whose fate he likens to that of his own father Peleus.[3] Priam and Peleus are two striking examples of the necessary imperfection of all human lives, even of those which appear to be the most brilliant. The balance of good and evil, moreover, is far from being always exact. We recall the symbolism of the two vases (πίθοι), placed on the threshold of the house of Zeus, which contain the gifts he gives to men: harmful gifts and useful gifts. "That mortal to whom Zeus deals a mingled lot meets now with evil, now with good. But he to whom the god sends misfortune only, is set apart for injury; cruel distress pursues him upon the earth; he wanders hither and thither, scorned by gods and by men."[4] Thus the poet lets us clearly understand that there are many human lives in which the sum of misfortunes largely exceeds the sum of happiness, that there are indeed those who seem to be condemned to unmixed misfortune. These passages, and many others,[5] make the claim impos-

[1] *Iliad*, xxiv, 525, 526. [2] *Iliad*, xvii, 446, 447. Cf. *Odyss.* xviii, 130, 131.
[3] *Iliad*, xxiv, 534 *et seq.* [4] *Iliad*, xxiv, 527–533.
[5] See M. Hild's essay, *Le Pessimisme moral et religieux chez Homère et chez Hesiode*, published in the *Revue de l'Histoire des religions*, vols. xiv and xv (1886, 1887).

sible that the Greeks of Homeric times were optimists.

Nor were the Greeks of the following centuries. The development of the myths of Prometheus and of Pandora in Hesiod is inspired by a profound feeling for the unhappy conditions of existence. This feeling is even more strongly expressed in the famous myth of the Ages, in which the poet draws so sombre a picture of his time. Man's complaints against life are also echoed in the elegies of Theognis, in lyric poetry, and especially in the plays of the tragic writers, contemporaries or predecessors of Euripides. But in Aeschylus and in Sophocles these complaints are in no way surprising. How could tragedy fail to awaken painful impressions in the souls of the persons that share in its action? How could it fail to extort alike from the witnesses and from the victims of its catastrophes despairing judgments of man's estate, accompanied by exclamations of surprise or of rebellion? The spectacle which tragedy[1] affords has nothing in it calculated to inspire love of life. Euripides, from the very fact that he was a tragic poet, was bound in his turn to express pessimistic thoughts; but he was to express them differently from his predecessors, with an emphasis that is peculiar to him.

He does not limit himself to repeating, after Homer and so many others, that human life is nought but suffering;[2] he seizes every opportunity to give proofs of this deplorable truth. What men call the good things of life are in his judgment not really good. The advantages of fortune, by which the common herd is dazzled, are delusive. A character in the *Bellerophon* maintained, to the point of paradox, that of the three principal states in which destiny can place man, riches, high birth, poverty, it is the last that is the happiest.[3] The praise of mediocrity, a trite theme which frequently recurs in Euripides, as in the other tragic writers, is also an indirect demonstration of the misery that goes with high rank.[4] Again he says: "All the great advantages of life may

[1] We speak here in general terms. There are tragedies by Euripides which, as we shall see, produce another impression, because their dénouement is happy.

[2] *Hippol.* 189. *Orestes*, 1-3 (verses translated by Cic. *Tusc.* iv, 29). Cf. *Iphig. at Aul.* 161; *Augè*, fragm. 273, etc.

[3] *Beller.* fragm. 285, verse 5 *et seq.*

[4] *Medea*, 122 *et seq.* *Ion*, 620 *et seq.*

sometimes be found in the possession of the same person; but it is but for a space. Wealth is not a prize that belongs to men in fee: this prize they get from the gods, and they merely have charge of it. For the gods can, when they choose, take back that which they have given."[1] Sometimes the poet expresses the idea of the instability of fortune by means of one of those comparisons which occur so often in his plays, and which he borrows from the spectacle of the sea that he loved to contemplate from his cavern at Salamis.[2] Sometimes—as in the following fragment from the *Danaè*—he poetically likens the vicissitudes of human life to the changes in the sky and in the atmosphere:

> "That which, whate'er it be, men name the heaven,
> Is even such, say I, as human fortune.
> This flasheth forth the summer's splendour bright,
> Gathers dense clouds, and deepeneth winter's gloom,
> Makes things to grow and fade, to live and die.
> So too of mortal seed: heaven prospereth some
> In sunny peace; with clouds it darkens some,
> And they with evils live: some lapped in wealth
> Yet, like the shifting seasons, wane away."[3]

If external advantages are a snare, man at least has within himself a power, more or less efficient, which he can exercise,—intelligence. But how limited is that power! Among the various kinds of human ignorance, there is one to which the Greeks were never reconciled, as is proved by their resort to soothsaying,—ignorance of the future. The heroes of tragedy sometimes seem to suffer as they proceed, through various sudden changes of fortune, toward an unknown goal, and are led in spite of themselves to events that are to be surprises for them. At the end of the *Alcestis* the leader of the chorus utters the following words:

> "O, the works of the Gods—in manifold forms they reveal them:
> Manifold things unhoped-for the Gods to accomplishment bring.
> And the things that we looked for, the Gods deign not to fulfil them;
> And the paths undiscerned of our eyes, the Gods unseal them.
> So fell this marvellous thing."[4]

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 555–557. [2] *Orestes*, 339–344.
[3] Fragm. 330, Nauck. Cf. *Ino*, fragm. 415 and fragm. incert. 916.
[4] *Alcestis*, 1159–1163.

The same reflection, almost word for word,[1] is met with at the close of the *Medea*, the *Andromache*, the *Helen* and the *Bacchanals*, where it seems simply to have amounted to a formula which the leader pronounced while the chorus left the orchestra, and which, no doubt, was lost amidst the noise of the audience leaving their seats. Some critics even conjecture that this formula must be attributed to the actors. Great importance therefore should not be attached to it. But the same thought is sometimes reproduced, in the course of the drama, by characters who bitterly deplore the uncertain course of human life in the profound darkness that hides from them even the nearest events.[2]

Can man, to whom knowledge of the future is denied, find any compensation in his knowledge of the past and of the laws of the world? Euripides' views on this subject cannot be regarded as doubtful. In his writings we find praise of the wise, which is praise of wisdom.[3] If he had not had faith in knowledge, he would not have associated with Anaxagoras nor have induced Socrates to talk. But he pursued the study of philosophy too far to be the dupe of the idle fancies which at the time were mingled with its truths or what seemed to be its truths. Doubtless, therefore, it is the pretentious and rash claims of science that he condemns in some passages which have been used in attempts to make him contradict himself.[4] As we have already said, it is impossible to attribute to him the contempt for human reason which characters in his plays profess who are the prey of mystical exaltation and whose minds are disturbed by religious enthusiasm.[5] But Euripides may have had faith in science without carrying that faith to the point of blindness. A superior genius may strive for the truth with all the strength of his soul without always deluding himself about the value of his efforts. The strongest intellects have their hours of weakness. We are therefore not surprised to find in Euripides, remembering the disturbed times in which he lived, traces of scientific scepticism. A character in the *Medea*,

[1] In the *Medea* the first verse is replaced by the following:

"All dooms be of Zeus in Olympus; 'tis his to reveal them."

[2] *Iphig. in Taur.* 476, 477.

[3] Fragm. 964, 902, 910.

[4] Fragm. 913 and the passages which we shall quote.

[5] See what is said previously, page 64, regarding the *Bacchanals*.

who to his part of messenger adds that of philosopher, says:

> "But man's lot now, as oft, I count a shadow,
> Nor fear to say that such as seem to be
> Wise among men and cunning in speech-lore (*μεριμνηταὶ λόγων*),
> Even these are chargeable with deepest folly."[1]

Is this a shaft hurled by chance at the philosophers, at those whom Aristophanes in the *Clouds*[2] characterizes by a word which recalls the very expression of Euripides? To judge by what follows, this passage has perhaps no such meaning, for the messenger adds: "No mortal in truth has happiness for his portion." Thus the poet merely wished to make him say that the wisdom of certain men is useless wisdom, because it is unable to give happiness. The poet's intention is less plain in another reflection, found in one of his lost tragedies,—a reflection that is a formula of extraordinary depth and boldness:

> "Silence that is the answer of the wise."[3]

Neither the great sceptics of antiquity, nor Montaigne, nor Pascal, have gone beyond that. But this is an isolated verse whose origin is unknown; we do not know what preceded it, nor what followed it. It would be rash to make use of it in order by main force to rank Euripides with the great family of sceptics, toward whom it seems that the nature of his mind must have made him incline.

Intellectual curiosity gives man but incomplete satisfaction, when indeed it does not expose him to cruel disappointments. Is he, then, likely to be happier in the exercise of his sentiments and affections? We need not stop to consider the ill that Euripides' heroes speak of love, because with them that passion is often an unhappy one. In the reflections which the poet attributes to the chorus, love is naturally considered a source of suffering even more than a source of joy.[4] In one place we read:

[1] *Medea*, 1224 *et seq.* Verses 1225–1227 have been suspected, without sufficient cause, by H. von Arnim in his edition of the *Medea* (Berlin, Weidmann, 1887). H. Weil and the other editors admit them.

[2] Verse 101, *μεριμνοφροντισταί*.

[3] Fragm. 977, Nauck: *ἡ γὰρ σιωπὴ τοῖς σοφοῖσιν ἀπόκρισις.*

[4] *Iphig. at Aul.* 543 *et seq.*

"For, whatsoever mortals fall in love,
When noble are the loved ones that they win,
There is nought lacking to such happiness."[1]

But in another place this sentiment is expressed:

"Love is a tyrant dread who hears not reason,
And in our souls' least noble part he rules."[2]

This double aspect of love is sometimes expressed in mythological form: "Eros, the god of the golden locks, has two bows: when he bends the one, it is to gladden the life of man; when he bends the other it is to wreck it."[3] This wrecking of life by love is another of the unfortunate states of humanity.

Together with this disturbing passion there is room in the human heart for other affections of a calmer character. But these affections, when they are profound, when they penetrate "to the very marrow of the soul,"[4] likewise become a source of suffering. Phaedra's nurse would have mortals feel for one another but a moderate sympathy, would have them contract friendships whose bonds it will be easy for them to tighten or to loosen, at their pleasure; for, she says, it is a very heavy burden for one heart to suffer for two.[5] Family affections are of the same character. Here we meet a question which we must not be astonished to find discussed in Euripides. Is marriage a blessing, or is it an evil? When we recall what the poet says of women there can be no doubt about the answer: marriage brings with it much more pain than joy.[6] What Euripides especially charges against marriage is the unduly large part that chance plays in it;[7] and it seems that therein he was not wrong. When an Athenian married, he knew the family of his future wife; he did not know the woman whom he wedded. She was usually very young, and until that time had grown up in the house, surrounded by her mother, her nurse and her servants, busy with spinning wool and with weaving. In this life of the women's apartment, whose regular

[1] *Andromeda*, fragm. 138.
[2] Fragm. 1054.
[3] *Iphig. at Aul.* 548–551. Cf. *Aeol.* fragm. 26.
[4] *Hippol.* 255.
[5] *Hippol.* 253–259.
[6] *Alcestis*, 238, 239.
[7] *Electra*, 1100, 1101. It is the chorus that speaks, just as in the passage cited from the *Alcestis*.

monotony was interrupted only by certain religious ceremonies, the young girl had seen nothing and learned nothing of life; she scarcely had a character. Her character would be formed and developed with age and in her married life; but it might develop in a manner contrary to the wishes of her husband, who was too busy to watch over it. Therefore a man ran a great risk in marrying. Must we take seriously the ingenious means of minimizing the risks of matrimony conceived by a character in the *Ino*? The laws which regulated marriage at Athens seemed to him to have been badly made and he proposed to introduce the following modification:

"The rich should have as many wives as may be,
If there be maintenance his halls within:
So from his home would he expel the bad,
And keep the good wife with all thankfulness.
But now they are tied to one, whereby they run
Sore risk: they cannot test their characters
Ere mortals ballast thus their homes with brides."[1]

Another charge against marriage in Euripides is that which has been made, more or less openly, by egoistic bachelors in all ages: marriage multiplies a man's chances of unhappiness.

"Oh, I envy the lot
Of the man without wife,
Without child: single-wrought
Is the strand of his life:
No soul-crushing burden of sorrow, no strength-overmastering strife.

"But that children should sicken,
That gloom of despair
Over bride-beds should thicken,
What spirit can bear?
When childless, unwedded, a man through life's calm journey might fare?"[2]

Thus speaks Admetus, who thinks altogether too much about himself, too little about the excellent wife from whom he has been separated. For this reason we may suspect that he here expresses a mere commonplace of general application.

The idea that children are a source of trouble appears to be a

[1] *Ino*, fragm. 402.

[2] *Alc.* 882 *et seq.*

favorite theme with Euripides, since it is developed in several places in his dramas.[1] But these passages are not of such a kind that we can be quite sure that they express the thought of the poet himself. In fact it is easy to set him in opposition to himself in this matter. In the *Ion* Creusa and Xuthus, who are disconsolate at being without issue, come to ask Apollo for a child. The chorus, whose feelings second this desire, declare that it seems hard to them to live without children and witless to resign one's self to this fate; they praise the fruitful houses in which there grow up strong sons who are their parents' strength in misfortune, their joy in prosperity, and who in war become a rampart, a pledge of safety for their country.[2] How can we forget the words of Andromache—that "children are man's life;" that he who has none doubtless suffers less, but that he enjoys a negative happiness, that "he is wretched in his happiness"?[3] How can we forget above all the beautiful verses in a fragment of the *Danaè* that express the joy that floods the heart of the father at sight of his first new-born child?[4]

> "Dear, lady, is the light of yonder sun,
> And ocean's windless heavings fair to see,
> And earth's spring-bloom, and wealth of gushing rills.
> Yea, praise of many fair things might I speak:
> But nought so radiant is, so fair to see,
> As for the childless, thrilled with yearning's pang,
> To see the light of young babes in their homes."

It cannot have entered the mind of the poet who wrote these verses to desire that men, from selfish and frequently ignorant motives, should condemn themselves never to know the joys of fatherhood. But he had observed the trend of human life too well not to have seen that in this matter, as in all others, the bad is the price at which the good must be bought, that suffering is the close and always redoubtable neighbor of pleasure. If we seek the poet's true opinion, we shall perhaps find it in the following fragment of the *Oenomaus:*

[1] *Med.* 1094–1115. *Suppl.* 1087 *et seq.* Fragm. incert. 908, Nauck.
[2] *Ion*, 472–491.
[3] *Androm.* 418–420 (δυστυχῶν δ' εὐδαιμονεῖ).
[4] Fragm. 316.

"Perplexed am I, I know not what to say,
Whether 'tis better that to mortals babes
Be born, or that life's harvest childless be.
I mark men wretched who have gotten none,
And such as have no whit the happier;
For evil issue are a hatefullest curse:
Yea and great trouble comes with virtuous offspring,
Since fear of harm to them torments their father."[1]

Thus paternity, as well as childlessness, is a source of suffering to man.

There exists another reason for man's suffering,—that he is the victim of heredity, both physically and morally. Sometimes he has within him a taint of vice that he has received with his blood; sometimes, honest by nature and in purpose, he is bound to expiate crimes that he has not committed, the crimes of his parents or of his ancestors.[2] The moral sense of the Greeks often indignantly protested against this belief in the inheritance of moral responsibility which was so prominent in the ideas of the ancients. Euripides too protests against it. He places his protest in the mouth of Hippolytus, the innocent victim of Phaedra's perfidy and of Theseus' mistake; victim also, we must not forget, of his ancestors' crimes. When he is brought upon the stage, bleeding, mutilated, racked by pain, and about to give up his soul, he recognizes in the blow which has been dealt him the hand of a deity who desired to punish in him the crimes of his race:

"Sins, long ago wrought
Of mine ancestors, gather:
Their doom tarries not,
But the scourge overfloweth the innocent — wherefore on me is it brought?"[3]

Hippolytus' feeling came, in the course of time, to be that of all enlightened minds. Only men with a blind regard for the traditions of the past were still to try, like Plutarch, to defend this idea of a tardy expiation of hereditary crimes, a conception by which the earliest poets and the wise men of old had merely attempted to explain how it so often happens in this world that virtue is unfortunate and vice triumphant. Euripides does not

[1] *Oenom.* fragm. 571. [2] *Bellerophon*, fragm. 298. [3] *Hippol.* 1380 *et seq.*

seek to explain this triumph of evil, but he sorrowfully confirms its existence, and he sees in it one of the things that make life bad. A character in the *Bellerophon* says that he had rather die:

> "Life is not worth living
> If we see evil men unjustly honoured."[1]

Other heroes, when they learn of fresh deeds of infamy that stir their indignation, draw a picture of the growing perversity of the human race whose black colors recall the iron age of Hesiod.[2] Thus in all respects life is bad. Euripides has expressed this idea in a manner that is peculiarly his own, in a tone full of pity for human misery:

> "Well were it done if, gathering, we bewailed
> The new-born for his heritage of ills,
> But sped with mirth and glad cries forth his home
> Him who hath died and gotten rest from trouble."[3]

The conclusion necessarily drawn from these passages is that it would be better for men not to be born. And this conclusion is formally expressed in a fragment of the *Bellerophon*.[4] But this despairing maxim does not belong to Euripides, as we might be tempted to believe. It was—so the poet himself informs us—a sort of a commonplace in Greece. We do not meet it in Homer, but it is found in Theognis,[5] and during many centuries poetry echoed it again and again. Tradition assigned a very ancient origin to this maxim, and at the same time attributed to it the character of a prophetic revelation. Aristotle, in his treatise on the *Soul*, related that Midas, king of Phrygia, one day succeeded in putting the prophet Silenus in chains, and urged him to tell him what was mortals' highest good and what prize they ought to prefer to all others. At first Silenus refused to reply and persisted in obstinate silence. Finally, urged by the king, he let these words escape him: "Children of a day, of a race doomed to pain

[1] *Bellerophon*, fragm. 293.

[2] *Hippol.* 936–942. Theseus carries the hyperbole so far as to say that soon the gods will have to add to the earth which we inhabit another earth to hold the ever growing crowd of evil-doers.

[3] *Cresphon.* fragm. 449. Translated by Cic. *Tusc.* i, 48, 115.

[4] Fragm. 285: κράτιστον εἶναι φημὶ μὴ φῦναι βροτῷ. [5] Verse 425, Bergk.

and to grievous trials, why do you force me to say things that it were better for you not to know? For it is for those who are ignorant of their misfortunes that life has the least sorrow. Of all things the best for man is not to live, even though he have an excellent nature; what is best for all men and for all women is not to be born."[1] This oracle of the aged Silenus is the last word of the pessimism of all times. We read in von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*: "We began this chapter with the question whether the existence or the non-existence of the world was preferable. After serious examination of this question, we have been obliged to reply that all existence in this world brings with it more pain than pleasure; that consequently it would have been preferable that the world should not exist."[2] The author was mistaken if he thought that he was bringing his study to a novel conclusion. The doctrine which places non-existence higher than existence, so far from being a discovery of our times, is lost in the night of Greek tradition, where it is mingled with fables of Asiatic mythology. We must therefore not make Euripides in any way responsible for what many others had said before him, but we may believe that ideas like these are not repugnant to him. In all his remaining dramas, we only once meet with an optimistic passage; this occurs in the *Suppliants*, but is not thought to be genuine.[3] Everywhere else he shows himself a confirmed pessimist. He is a pessimist both by trade (since he writes tragedies) and temperament, and also by reflection, since he has wished to look too deeply into things human. The Phrygian prophet, in declaring to men that the best thing for them was not to be born, added that the next best was "once born, to die as soon as possible." Had the maxims of Silenus succeeded in influencing the minds of the Greeks, we see what their practical results would have been. Non-existence being superior to existence, and existence being an evil, the instinct which leads men to avoid that which is bad for them would

[1] Aristotle in Plut. *Mor.* p. 115 (*Consol. Apollon.* 27). [vol. iii, p. 118.

[2] *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, p. 749. In W. C. Coupland's English version,

[3] Various details have been criticised as interpolations. I should be tempted to believe that the part of Theseus' speech which extends from verse 195 to verse 219, and which does not at all respond to the words of Adrastus, comes entire from a tragedy in which an optimistic thesis, whose development has been preserved for us, is opposed to a pessimistic thesis. But this is only a conjecture.

have driven the Greeks to rid themselves of life. Euripides did not go so far as that extreme conclusion. Casually he has touched upon the question of suicide, as he touches upon many other questions, and on this subject he seems to have adopted the middle view which, in a general way, condemns homicide as such, while considering it excusable in certain specified cases. Those who claimed that it was right to escape from the sufferings of life by hanging or throwing one's self from a precipice do not appear to him to deserve to be counted in the ranks of the wise: they are distempered or mad.[1] When Teucer informs Helen that Ajax has taken his life by falling upon his sword, Helen answers: "Was he distraught? For what man in possession of his senses would dare to do such a deed?"[2] Orestes, a prey to the Furies, the avengers of the murder of his mother, intimates to Menelaus that there is a way of escape from his sufferings. Menelaus, who believes that he divines his thought, replies: "Speak not of dying: that is not wisdom."[3] Heracles, who slays his children in a moment of insanity, wishes for death as soon as he has regained possession of his reason; but he fears to be thought a coward if he inflicts it upon himself. "The man who knows not how to bear misfortune," he says, "will not have courage to face the attacks of the enemy."[4] Here then suicide is considered as an act of madness and condemned as cowardly.

There are, however, circumstances in which it may be excused, if not approved; for example, when physical pain exceeds the limits of human strength. Polymestor, who has just had his eyes put out by Hecuba, wishes he were able to throw himself into the pit of Hades. The leader of the chorus, who sees him and hears him, says that a man must be forgiven his desire to rid himself of life when it has become an unendurable torture.[5] In another case also voluntary death is justifiable,—to save one's honor from irreparable disgrace. This is the motive which Phaedra advances. Smitten by love, she has for a long time fought against her affliction. Vanquished, nothing is left for her but to die, since she wishes never to be reproached with having dishonored her husband and children. At the moment when she is about to exe-

[1] Fragm. incert. 1070, Nauck. [2] *Helen*, 97. [3] *Orestes*, 415.
[4] *Heracles*, 1347 *et seq.* [5] *Hecuba*, 1107, 1108.

cute her resolution, the chorus seem to recognize that there is no other solution of the situation.[1] Hecuba blames Helen for not having taken the same resolve. If Helen had been carried off against her will, as she pretends, if she had felt honest regret for her first husband, like a true-hearted wife, she would have put the noose about her neck or whetted the sword.[2] Thus Euripides appears to recommend death to a dishonored wife, whatever part her own will may have had in her shame. Did this advice have practical results? If we could trust Aristophanes we should be tempted to believe this. In the celebrated scene of the *Frogs* in which Euripides contends with Aeschylus, the latter taunts his rival with his adulterous and shameless women, with his Phaedra and Stheneboea. "Well, what harm have my Stheneboeas done to Athens?" Euripides asks. "It is due to you," replies Aeschylus, "that honorable women, the wives of honorable citizens, have drunk the hemlock, in very shame of your Bellerophons."[3] This means, no doubt, that wives who had lived honorably up to that time had conceived adulterous passions, after the manner of Phaedra and Stheneboea; that they had met their Hippolytus and Bellerophon,—in other words, that they had been scorned,—and that shame and despair had then driven them to take their lives by poison. Is this an allusion to some domestic drama in the Athens of that time? Or should we see in this passage simply an ill-natured insinuation directed at once against Euripides and against women? It is hard to decide this question.

[1] *Hippolytus*, 400, 419, 770 *et seq.* The same opinion was later expressed by Plato, who, in the ninth book of *The Laws*, cites, among the exceptional instances in which suicide is excusable, the case where one is brought to it "by some opprobrium which one can neither remove nor bear." That is precisely Phaedra's case.

[2] *Daughters of Troy*, 1012 *et seq.*

[3] *Frogs*, 1050, 1051.

II

WHAT IS DEATH?
VARIOUS ANSWERS
PHILOSOPHICAL HYPOTHESES

What is the death for which certain of Euripides' heroines long? What is the condition of human beings after the cessation of life? It may be interesting to inquire what a poet-philosopher like Euripides thought on this subject, and whether he had views about death which were not those generally entertained.

His characters—and we need not be surprised at this—are often led to express the accepted belief regarding the nether world. The Greeks would not have understood if Electra and Orestes, before carrying out their revenge, had not invoked Agamemnon.[1] But that invocation presupposes that the departed, though beneath the earth, still has the semblance of existence; that he hears—Electra is convinced of this—the voices of his children; and that he is able to help them. In the *Hecuba* Neoptolemus, before immolating Polyxena on the tomb of Achilles, invokes his father: he implores him to accept the libations which induce the dead to issue from their subterranean abode, and to come and drink the black blood of the young girl.[2] At the close of the *Daughters of Troy*, when Hecuba, about to be dragged off into captivity, hears the crash of Troy as it falls in flames, she throws herself upon the ground, she beats the earth[3] with both her hands in order that the dead may hear, and that her lamentations may reach the ears of her children.[4] The women of the chorus, in turn, fall upon their knees and with loud cries call upon their husbands, in the depths of the earth.[5] Euripides then did not neglect the dramatic effects with which the traditional worship of the dead was able to supply him.

But when he is not in search of such effects, the spirit of doubt reappears in his dramas. Megara, the wife of Heracles, also invokes the hero, her husband, whom she believes to have descended to the dead; but she prefaces the invocation with a

[1] *Electra*, 677 *et seq.* [2] *Hecuba*, 534–541. [3] Cf. *Iliad*, ix, 568.
[4] *Daughters of Troy*, 1302. [5] *Daughters of Troy*, 1307.

sceptical qualification: "This is what I say to thee, O Heracles, if indeed the dead in Hades hear the voices of the living."[1] In a fragment of the *Cresphontes* we read about Heracles:

> "For if he dwelleth in the underworld
> Midst those that are no more, he is strengthless all."[2]

Thus the dead Heracles is without power, while Agamemnon and Achilles in the passages just cited are considered as still powerful although in their tombs. This is an example of the contradictions which are so common in Euripides: obliged to introduce current views and opinions, he appears to take his revenge for this by criticising, as soon as the opportunity offers, the conventional ideas which just before he has appeared to accept.

What his characters think of man's condition after death ordinarily conforms to the general belief. For them death is characterized chiefly by the cessation of suffering. According to a euphemism which is as melancholy as it is expressive, the dead are οἱ καμόντες, "they who have suffered and suffer no more." Admetus regards himself as more unfortunate than Alcestis, who, in dying, becomes a stranger to all pain.[3] Hecuba says that the dead lose the recollection of their ills, that they no longer weep.[4] If, after death, there is cessation of pain, there is likewise cessation of pleasure.[5] Thus death is a negative state which does not appear to differ from non-existence. Euripides' heroes agree about this. Iphigeneia declares that "the life of the grave is nothingness;"[6] Andromache, that "to die is the same as never to have been born."[7] A similar thought is expressed, with singular severity, in a fragment of the *Meleager:*

> "All who have died
> Are shadows and dust: nothingness fades to nothingness."[8]

This maxim, in its conciseness, merely reproduces an idea which was very common in the vague state of belief which prevailed

[1] *Heracles*, 490, 491.
[2] Fragm. 450.
[3] *Alcestis*, 937, 938.
[4] *Daughters of Troy*, 602, 637, 638.
[5] *Orestes*, 1084. Cf. Lycurgus, *Against Leocrates*, 60.
[6] *Iphig. at Aul.* 1251.
[7] *Daughters of Troy*, 632, 636. Cf. *Alcestis*, 381: οὐδέν ἐσθ' ὁ καθανών.
[8] Fragm. 532. Sophocles has also said (*Electra*, 1166): δέξαι με . . . τὴν μηδὲν εἰς τὸ μηδέν. Thus it was a current idea. Cf. *Children of Heracles*, 593.

among the greater part of Euripides' contemporaries, among those at least who did not go to Eleusis and who were not affiliated with the Orphic sect, and among that inconscient and apathetic multitude for whom death was without hope, or to whom it afforded no other prospect than the cessation of the evils of life.

Side by side with these passages are others which show traces of Euripides' personal prepossessions and in which we recognize the mark of his philosophical beliefs. In a fragment of the *Hypsipyle*, translated by Cicero, the thought is evolved that death should be considered as a natural law against which there is no reason to rebel. This fragment is noteworthy:

> "Never was man born but to toil and pain.
> He burieth children, getteth him new babes,
> And dies himself: yet men are grieved hereat,
> When dust to dust they bear! Needs must it be
> That death like corn-shocks garner lives of men,
> That this man be, that be no more. Now why
> Mourn what all must by Nature's law pass through?
> There is no horror in the inevitable."[1]

This passage was celebrated in antiquity. The academician Carneades maintained that such language was not likely to console men for the cruelty of death; Chrysippus, on the contrary, admired its lofty tone and recognized in it one of the doctrines of the Portico.[2] Whatever point of view we choose to take, we must recognize that those who selected and preserved this fragment for us chose wisely. According to Euripides, death, which we must bear without a murmur, as we bear the expected and inevitable effect of a law, should no longer be to us an object of terror. Twice he tells us that if we tremble to quit the light of the sun, if love of life is deeply rooted in the heart of men, this is because man knows what life is, while he does not know what death is: it is the unknown alone that frightens him.[3] Popular traditions and poets' tales pretended to inform men fully of what happened beneath the earth. There was no Greek child that was not familiar with Cerberus and with Charon's boat, that did not know Cocytus and Acheron. But Euripides regarded these stories as of

[1] Fragm. 757.

[2] Cic. *Tuscul.* iii, 25, 59.

[3] *Hippol.* 193–196. *Phoenix*, fragm. 816, verses 10, 11.

no account: he declares explicitly that they are empty fables,[1] and that in reality dense obscurity hides from us that which lies beyond the tomb.[2] But what are we allowed to conjecture, if not to know, about what lies beyond?

Euripides, in his philosophizing mood, gives two different answers to this question, between which it is possible that his belief hesitated and vacillated. The first, which is in contradiction with certain passages quoted above, is that death is not non-existence, but "another life," [3] or "another form of existence." [4] He asks:

> "Who knows but death may be what men call life,
> And life be dying?" [5]

Wisely and in a truly philosophical spirit, Euripides affirms nothing; he limits himself to putting a question to his audience. It is not probable that he originated this question: he no doubt had heard it discussed among his friends the philosophers; perhaps he had brought it away with him from a conversation with Socrates. But this noble and attractive hypothesis which places the beginning of the true life after death was not to be fully developed until somewhat later in the Platonic philosophy.[6] By proclaiming it more than once publicly in the theatre, Euripides won the credit of awakening the thoughts of his contemporaries on this subject and of familiarizing their minds with this great idea.

His second answer, of a more precise and scientific character, is the following: At the moment of death the two principal elements of which a human being is composed are separated: the body goes back to the earth; the soul, that which the poet calls πνεῦμα, the breath of life, is lost in the midst of the ether.[7] What then is this general meeting-place of human souls, the *ether?* We have already met with this word and with this conception. The ether of Euripides, as we have pointed out, is nothing else than

[1] *Hippol.* 197: μύθοις δ' ἄλλως φερόμεσθα.

[2] *Hippol.* 192.

[3] *Hippol.* 195: ἄλλος βίοτος.

[4] *Medea*, 1039. *Ion*, 1067: ἄλλο σχῆμα, ἄλλαι μορφαὶ βίου.

[5] *Phrix.* fragm. 833. The same idea recurs, in almost the same form, in a fragment of the *Polyidus* (638). It was parodied by Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1082 and 1477.

[6] Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*, p. 492 e.

[7] *Chrysipp.* fragm. 839. *Suppl.* 532–534. *Orestes*, 1086. *Phoen. Maid.* 809. Fragm. incert. 971, Nauck. In verse 1139 *et seq.* of the *Suppliants* the common conception of Hades is found mingled with this philosophic conception.

the infinite air of the Ionic philosophers,[1] and in his doctrine—for on this point the poet either has an actual doctrine, or he reproduces one—the ether plays a cosmogonic part, analogous to that which the Theogony assigns to Uranus. Just as the Earth is the common mother, so the Ether is the common father. It is "the Begetter."[2] If in the beginning the union of Ether and Earth gave birth to man as it did to other living species, there must, as a consequence, be two elements in man: a terrestrial element, which is the body; an ethereal element, which is the soul, πνεῦμα. Furthermore Euripides holds with Anaxagoras that nothing that exists perishes; that the elements of beings can be dissolved, but that they cannot be lost. His conclusion is that at the moment of death the two essential parts of the human being return each to the source from which it has sprung: the body goes back to the earth that once brought it forth and that has nourished it; the soul goes to reunite itself with the ether by which it was begotten in the earliest days of the world. Thus the soul of man cannot die;[3] but this new kind of immortality has nothing in common with that with which Euripides elsewhere flattered the fancies of his contemporaries. The conception of an "actual life" which unfolds itself only after death does indeed presuppose the perpetuity of the reason and the continuity of the human person. The immortality of the soul which loses itself in the ether is an immortality in which the individual disappears, which consequently does not interest men, and in which only a few superior minds could find a semblance of satisfaction.

A poet, reared in the school of the philosophers, had already expressed the same idea in the epitaph for the Athenians who died under the walls of Potidaea:[4] therefore it does not properly belong to Euripides. But he reproduced this very austere and extremely disinterested conception of immortality so often and with so much insistence that we cannot refuse to believe that he gave it his assent.

[1] See above, chap. ii, pp. 59–61. [2] *Chrysipp.* fragm. 839, verse 2.

[3] *Helen*, 1014–1016. The passage has been suspected by Nauck. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Anal. Euripidea*, p. 164) corrects it and retains it.

[4] *Corp. Inscr. Attic.* i, 442, l. 5. Kaibel, *Epigramm. Graec.* no. 21: *αἰθὴρ μὲν ψυχὰς ὑπεδέξατο. σώ[ματα δὲ χθών]*.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIETY

I

SATIRE ON WOMEN

IF we pass from ethical problems to questions that relate to social life, we shall meet in Euripides prepossessions of another kind. That a poet, such as he, should often have attributed to the heroes of the past the ideas and views of the men of the present is not surprising. What is surprising is that the present is the object of his criticism; that this criticism not only attacks prejudices and conventionalities, but like the criticism of comedy is brought to bear upon entire classes and categories of people. It was above all the women who had ground for complaint against Euripides. It is true that in his day their importance had increased. Several plays of Aristophanes give evidence that at the time of the Peloponnesian War they were trying to emerge from the obscurity in which they had previously been kept; that they desired to emancipate themselves; that they meant to oblige men to reckon with them. The dramas of Euripides also show that they did not propose to be thrust aside. His dramas of marriage are not a novelty,—who could forget Aeschylus' *Agamemnon?*—but still this theme is more frequently dealt with by him than by his predecessors, and women assume the rôle on the stage which they are henceforth to hold in real life. But if Euripides recognizes this new power, he does not deal with it gently. The noble female characters which he borrowed from the legends, and whose traits he delighted to portray with a thousand delicate shades,—Alcestis, Iphigeneia, Evadne, Laodameia,[1]—seem to have been lofty, ideal figures, far removed from reality. When he introduces into his dramas personal observations on contemporary life, he expresses views about women which are often of extreme severity. The anger against Euripides which Aristophanes[2] attributes to them is justifiable: he has said little of them that is good, and a great deal that is bad.

[1] In the lost tragedy *Protesilaus.*

[2] *Thesmoph.* 85, 389 *et seq.*, 545, etc.

Not that he was the first poet to attack them. In Greece criticism of feminine imperfections was a trite theme, a sort of poetic commonplace. Euripides himself tells us that it was "an old refrain."[1] This refrain the poets, no doubt, borrowed from popular tradition. Was it the people, or was it Hesiod, who invented the myth of Pandora, that first woman whom the gods inflicted upon man in expiation of the sins of Prometheus? Was Simonides of Amorgus inventing when he likened certain traits of women to those of the fox, the monkey, and other mischievous animals?[2] In every age man has had so lively a sense of his superiority over the other sex that any writer has always been sure to please him who fortified him in this view. Several Greek poets have essayed this task. Criticism of the vices and the caprices of women was, however, the special province of comedy. In Aristophanes this criticism is gross and violent, and often wallows in filth; but Aristophanes does not abandon his rôle when he maltreats women. But to see a tragic poet[3] like Euripides usurp the functions of the comic poet, in order to lay stress at every opportunity upon the shortcomings of women, at first startles and astonishes us. This is an important question and merits consideration.

Can the attacks upon women which occur so frequently in the extant plays as well as in the fragments of the lost dramas of Euripides be explained by the character and by the situation of the persons whom the poet places on the stage? It is impossible to give an exact and trustworthy answer to this question, because only seventeen of the seventy-five dramas that the ancient critics read are preserved entire. A study of these seventeen plays, however, gives us sufficient information on the point which engages our attention. We must recognize at the outset that certain of Euripides' heroes have their reasons for not loving women. Hippolytus speaks ill of them, but not, assuredly, because he knows them well: his youth, his chastity, his disdain for the religion of

[1] παλαιγενὴς or παλίμφαμος ἀοιδή (*Medea*, 421; *Ion*, 1096).

[2] Bergk, *Lyrici Graeci*, vol. ii, p. 446, fragm. 7.

[3] Aeschylus (*Seven against Thebes*, 187 *et seq.*, 200, ed. H. Weil) had already placed in the mouth of Eteocles some criticisms regarding women. The chorus of the *Agamemnon* (485–487) casually points out their disposition to idle fancies, their readiness to believe good news. But these are isolated cases.

Aphrodite, his exclusive devotion to the worship of Artemis, all forbid him to have intercourse with them. Hippolytus does not know women, but he fears them; and this suffices to keep him from being indulgent with them. Moreover his fears are soon justified: when he has heard from the nurse's lips of Phaedra's criminal passion, we can understand that he should become indignant, and that he should include the whole race of women in the legitimate aversion with which Phaedra inspires him. The poet furnishes another example, but of a person who is in a situation very different from that of Hippolytus. Jason, face to face with Medea, whom he has betrayed, must inevitably be extremely embarrassed; it is true that he tries to prove to the woman who has sacrificed everything for him and whom he has rewarded by desertion, that she is in the wrong and he in the right; but as he is conscious of his sophistries, he soon resorts to ideas of more general application,[1] and finds it more convenient to lay the blame on all the sex than to deal with a single woman. Is it not clear that in attributing such words to Jason, the poet gives proof of accurate observation of human nature? Is it not, indeed, at the moment when we are most plainly in the wrong on a special point in a discussion that we are most inclined to avoid the limited field in which we feel weak, in order to escape into the vague and less dangerous domain of generalization? Jason condemns all women, not because he means a word of what he says, but because he hopes thereby to get himself out of a predicament.

The two instances which we have just cited are exceptions. As a rule, Euripides' tragic heroes express themselves in a most improbable way—sometimes in veritable tirades—about the vices of women. It is surely the poet's thought and not their own that they express. It appears certain that the poet wished to satirize, and did satirize, the women of his time—incidentally, but with a persistence that does not admit misapprehension of his intentions. His attention, which was directed to so many important objects, had necessarily to be turned to the condition of women, to their conduct, to the part which they play, to that which they are called upon to play, in the family and in society. Hence his criticisms, and the injunctions which he addresses to them.

[1] *Medea*, 569–575.

"I hate all womankind except my mother."[1]

This frank declaration of misogyny is not always properly motivated in Euripides. Ordinarily his characters are content to affirm, without proving their affirmation,[2] that woman is man's scourge, a baneful scourge, more noxious than a viper, harder to fight than fire.[3] In speaking of woman, their tone sometimes rises, their voice gathers volume and even reaches invective:

"Dread is the might of surges of the sea,
And dread the roar of rivers and red fire,
And dread is want, and dread are things untold;
But there is no scourge dread as woman is;
No painting could portray her hideousness
Nor speech declare. If this thing by some god
Was moulded, greatest fashioner of ills
And most malevolent to man was he."[4]

Well might men wish to purge the earth of this dire scourge; but how shall they go about it? Euripides suggests a singular expedient: "Mortals," says Jason, "ought to be able to get children by some other means than women; there would then be no more women, and men would be delivered from all evil."[5] What is this means? In another passage the poet takes pains to indicate it:

"For, were thy will to raise a mortal seed,
This ought they not of women to have gotten,
But in thy temples should they lay its price,
Of gold, or iron, or a weight of bronze,
And so buy seed of children, every man
After the worth of his gift, and dwell
Free in free homes, unvexed of womankind."[6]

Alas, Zeus lacked imagination: he failed to find the recipe invented by Hippolytus, and thus woman became the torment of man's existence. The strangeness of this idea, which Milton has,

[1] *Melanippe Bound*, fragm. 498, Nauck. Cf. *Meleager*, fragm. 528; *Aeolus*, fragm. 36.

[2] To say, as Hippolytus does (628, 629), that the proof that woman is worthless lies in the fact that the father gives a dower to his daughter in order to get rid of her cannot be regarded as a serious argument.

[3] *Androm.* 271–273, 353. *Hippol.* fragm. 429. *Oedipus*, fragm. 544. *Phoenix*, fragm. 808. [4] Fragm. incert. 1059, Nauck. [5] *Medea*, 573–575.

[6] *Hippolytus*, 618 *et seq.* Cf. Lucian, *Amores*, p. 439.

nevertheless, reproduced in his *Paradise Lost*,[1] admonishes us that it is not serious. Here, as in the passages cited above, we must see merely one of those sallies, of doubtful sincerity, which may have made the public smile, but certainly did not rouse its passions. But these sallies had their *raison d'être* in the customs and habits of social life: it is there that their explanation must be sought.

In Athens, in the fifth century, marriage was not what it is with us. The Athenian of that time did not marry in order to have a companion and helpmeet in his life: he married chiefly in order to perform a duty toward the state,—to fulfil a patriotic obligation. The woman was not chosen by the man for her own sake, for her merits, real or imaginary: she was accepted, almost submitted to, as one submits to a law. The woman was, in fact, the means of perpetuating the family and of preserving the city. The Athenian who looked merely for the charm of agreeable intercourse sought the company of courtesans, who had that which virtuous women lacked,—grace, education,[2] *esprit;* but only the legitimate wife made it possible for a citizen to square his account with the state, to which he owed children. "To be married," says the author of the *Oration against Neaera*, "means to have children, in order that we may enter our sons in the phratries and demes, and give our daughters in marriage. We have hetaerae for our pleasure; . . . we have wives that they may bear us legitimate children and that they may be faithful guardians of our homes."[3] The wife, whose rôle was thus limited to two definite functions, the bearing of children and the management of the household,—the Athenian wife, who was obliged by custom and convention to show herself in public as rarely as possible, must have been, it seems, very little in the way of the Athenian man, whose entire day was spent out of doors. Why then did he complain of her? He complained because he regarded himself as the absolute master of his own house, and yet

[1] Book x, 888–895.

[2] "One could hardly find one woman in a thousand," says the chorus of the *Medea* (1088, 1089), "who is not a stranger to the Muses." This is generally supposed to be an allusion to Aspasia.

[3] *Oration against Neaera*, 122, p. 1386.

she who shared it with him was sometimes so indiscreet as to have a will of her own; he complained because he wished the mother of his children to be free from every imperfection, and yet she always had some faults, sometimes even vices, which she owed either to nature or to education. Euripides will tell us what these faults and vices are.

If we may believe him—and no doubt he speaks for the husbands of his time—the Athenian wife had a great many faults, some slight, others serious. Among the former must be ranked curiosity. The Athenian woman was inquisitive: how could she help it? When she was allowed to cross the threshold of her house, in order to attend a funeral or to take part in religious ceremonies,—when, on festival days, she followed a procession or saw a play, how could she help experiencing, at the sight of all about her, that delicious enjoyment, that pleasure "sweet as honey," of which the poet speaks?[1] Soon she was to return home, would again be secluded in the shade of the women's apartment for long weeks, perhaps for months. Why should she not take advantage of the rare moments of liberty which the law or the tolerance of her husband allowed her, and see that which interested her? Her curiosity was in fact very pardonable. But one fault entails another. When a woman appeared out of doors, it was natural that she should wish to be seen to advantage: in order to appear, and to appear in such guise as not to disgrace her husband, she had to pay some attention to her toilet. It was this that exasperated the husbands. The more suspicious dared to say that a woman who was virtuous, and who thought no evil, would not seek to adorn her person.[2] Another complained that his wife was an "image" (ἄγαλμα) which had to be magnificently clothed and whose support cost so much that he was ruined by it.[3] The poet also shows us women holding in their hands those metal mirrors whose polished surface reflects the glory of their beauty.[4] Above all he

[1] *Iphig. at Aul.* 234.

[2] *Electra*, 1072–1075. Helen sends the hair which has been cut from her head as an offering to the tomb of her sister Clytemnestra; but she takes care, in order to spare her beauty, to cut off only the ends of her locks (*Orestes*, 128). Helen, it is true, is the greatest coquette among women.

[3] *Hippolytus*, 630 *et seq.*

[4] *Hecuba*, 925, 926. *Daughters of Troy*, 1107. *Electra*, 1071.

shows us in a very dramatic situation a woman who dies a most awful death by falling into the snare which had been set for her vanity and her love of dress. This is the daughter of Creon, king of Corinth, she who robbed Medea of Jason's love. Before going into exile Medea desires to take revenge upon her rival. Pretending that she has a favor to ask of her, she sends her the gift of a diadem and of a gown whose poisonous fabric will cling to the body of the unfortunate woman and consume her in awful suffering. Medea's children are bidden to carry these presents to Creusa on the pretext that they are to implore her to allow them to take refuge in exile. When they arrive, Creon's daughter at first turns away her face: she hates the sight of Medea's children and does not wish to listen to their supplications. But she refuses to receive the children only because she has not yet seen what they bring. As soon as she perceives their presents, a sudden change is wrought in her feelings:

> "She, when she saw the attire, could not refrain,
> But yielded her lord all. And ere their father
> Far from her bower with those thy sons had gone,
> She took the rich-wrought robes and clad herself,
> Circling her ringlets with the golden crown,
> And by a shining mirror ranged her tresses,
> Smiling at her own phantom image there.
> Then, rising from her seat, she paced adown
> The halls with mincing tread of ivory feet,
> Exulting in the gifts, and oftentimes
> Sweeping her glance from neck to ankle-hem."[1]

In this little scene, that shows such power of close observation, is it the daughter of the king of Corinth that Euripides wishes to portray? Is it not rather the Athenian woman at her toilet on a day of festival?[2] But we must not attribute to the poet the intention of moralizing and of showing the women, by a striking example, the fatal consequence of coquetry. Euripides, doubtless, did not invent the death of this woman, caught by the seduction of her vanity; he must have got the story from tradition.

The charge of gossipping and of slandering is so commonly

[1] *Medea*, 1156–1166.

[2] Cf. the description of the objects of a woman's toilet in Aristophanes' lost *Thesmophoriazusae*, fragm. 6.

brought against women that we need not be surprised to meet with it in the plays of Euripides. "The smallest thing," he says, "sets them a-talking; with them, the slightest pretext brings on a deluge of words." [1] What pleasure, too, they take in slandering one another! When they are defending their rights or their encroachments against their common enemy, man, every woman—again the poet speaks—is the natural ally of every other woman; [2] but when so serious an interest is not at stake, the allies of yesterday become the enemies of to-day and tear one another to pieces.[3] We must add that these Athenian women are indiscreet, and that it is not well to inform them about an enterprise that must be kept secret. When Pylades plots the death of Menelaus with Orestes, he suddenly catches sight of the women of the chorus and makes a sign to his friend to be silent: he fears betrayal.[4]

Another trait in the character of the Athenian woman is her cleverness, which Euripides, pessimist that he is, declares is always devoted to evil-doing.[5] He has one of his heroines say that if the prize of victory belonged to cunning, the women would reign and would govern the men.[6] He taunts them with their artfulness, their excessive finesse.[7] We do not know how much foundation there was for these complaints, to justify which comedy, that exaggerates everything, would hardly suffice; but it must be admitted that the situation in which the Athenian woman found herself placed would necessarily develop in her the spirit of deceit. Neglected by her husband, who looked after his business and his pleasures all day, the woman revenged herself in her own fashion for her deserted state, and possibly for more than one conjugal infidelity, by trying to impose the grossest possible deceits on the man who committed the wrong of slighting her: the means she employed to dupe him, the tactics she developed to arrive at her goal, constituted for her a sort of revenge for the inferiority to which the law and the selfishness of the men condemned her.[8]

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 198–200. [2] *Alope*, fragm. 108. [3] *Phoen. Maid.* 200, 201.
[4] *Orestes*, 1103. Cf. *Stheneboea*, fragm. 671. [5] *Medea*, 408, 409.
[6] *Danaè*, fragm. 321. [7] *Hippol.* 480, 481. *Androm.* 85. *Iphig. in Taur.* 1032.
[8] See on this subject the essay by M. Lallier, *De la condition de la femme dans la famille athénienne au v^e^ et au iv^e^ siècle* (Paris, Thorin, 1875).

Faults of this kind could not escape even a superficial observation. Euripides penetrated still more deeply into the souls of women. He places in relief the contradictions and the contrasts of their nature,—a nature made up of timidity and boldness, of weakness and violence.[1] Woman, he remarks, is naturally given to tears; she experiences a sort of pleasure in complaining; she always has her misfortunes on her lips.[2] The show of force frightens her; she trembles at the sight of steel, but she prepares terrible surprises for him who happens not to know her well. This weak creature becomes, upon occasion, a strong creature. The woman who has been deceived by her husband shrinks from nothing; "there exists no soul that is more bloodthirsty."[3] If she does not succeed in satisfying her vengeance by force, she will employ deceit. She will know how to repress her wrath, to await a favorable time, to lie in wait for her victims and to show them a smiling face. Medea, condemned to exile, requires delay that will give her time to take her revenge. In order to obtain it, she is capable of flattering the aged king of Corinth, who is driving her from the country. In order that her children may be able to carry to the newly wedded wife the garment which is to be her shroud, Medea will belie all her feelings: she will call Jason to her side as though she were ashamed of her recent outbursts of anger; she will ask pardon for wrongs that she has not committed of the husband who has just deserted her; she will humiliate herself before the man who has inflicted the most cruel outrage upon her.[4] Euripides has not here represented the character of the enchantress of Colchis such as he had found it in tradition; what he wishes to portray is the astonishing power of dissimulation that certain women's souls hold in reserve, and which an outraged wife can employ, at a given moment, in order better to assure the accomplishment of her revenge. We must not be surprised that women employ such means; very few of them accept betrayal with resignation. "Couldst thou not bear in silence the pain that love gives thee?" says Andromache to Hermione, whose rival she is. Hermione replies: "How could I? Does not love everywhere hold the first place

[1] *Augè*, fragm. 276.
[2] *Medea*, 928. *Androm.* 93–95.
[3] *Medea*, 263–266. Cf. 571–573.
[4] *Medea*, 869 *et seq.*

with women?"[1] Love, such as the poet describes, is indeed the great concern of women's lives. It is a malady which afflicts them more seriously than it does men;[2] it is a madness[3] which, when it has once seized its victims, possesses them entirely. There is no longer any difference among them either as to birth or as to social standing. The best bred woman sometimes goes further in her passionate outbursts than she who has no breeding at all.[4] A daughter of one of the noblest races of Greece, Helen, is also one of the most dissolute of women: she has not only left Menelaus to follow Paris, she has given herself to other heroes, to Theseus, to Deïphobus. But the character of Helen is borrowed from the epic, and one can hardly allege that the poet wished to make her the type of the adulterous woman of his time. Recourse must be had to other passages to determine his thought.

We read in a fragment of one of his lost tragedies:

> "More than the sire the mother loves her babes:
> She knows them truly hers, he *thinks* them his."[5]

These two verses might, without improbability, be attributed to Menander. Both in spirit and in tone, they seem to be verses of comedy rather than of tragedy. But such incongruity, which is not rare in Euripides, is not a proper reason for refusing to attribute this sentiment to him. Malicious sayings of this kind were, no doubt, already trite at that time. Ordinarily, however, the poet speaks of the misbehavior of women in a more serious vein,—misbehavior, which, if Phaedra's nurse may be trusted, must have been quite frequent:

> "How many men, think'st thou, and wise men they,
> Knowing their beds dishonoured, shut their eyes? . . .
> —the maxim this
> Of wise men, that dishonour be not seen."[6]

Among the women who are most inclined to deceive their hus-

[1] *Andromache*, 240, 241. [2] *Andromache*, 220, 221.

[3] This madness of love, which worries woman with incontinent desires, is often expressed by the words μωρία, τὸ μῶρον (*Daughters of Troy*, 1059; *Hippol.* 644, 966; *Electra*, 1035). On the violence of women's love, compare Aeschylus, *Choephori*, 600.

[4] *Alope*, fragm. 111. Cf. *Hippol.* 409, 410.

[5] Fragm. incert. 1004, Nauck. [6] *Hippol.* 462–466.

bands, Euripides places those who are too clever. Hippolytus, who moralizes a great deal for a young man without experience of life, says:

> "Happiest who wins a cipher, in whose halls
> A brainless fadge is throned in uselessness.
> But the keen-witted hate I: in mine house
> Ne'er dwell one wiser than is woman's due;
> For Cypris better brings to birth her mischief
> In clever women: the resourceless 'scapes
> That folly by the short-weight of her wit."[1]

These clever women are those that go to the bad with the lightest heart and betray their husbands with perfect assurance. Since they are conscious of their resources, they do not tremble. One should read in Aristophanes the long list of deceptions that Athenian women impose on their husbands.[2] Most significant of all are the wiles of Euphiletus' wife, described in Lysias' speech on the *Murder of Eratosthenes*.[3] Here we no longer deal with the idle talk of comedy, whose accuracy is always doubtful; we find ourselves face to face with an actual occurrence in the life of Athens in the fifth century. Though it would not be fair to judge the morals of women of that age by the suits for adultery about which the pleadings of the orators inform us, it is none the less true that the wife of Euphiletus is the type of those clever women of whom Euripides speaks, who display the resources of unlimited skill in maintaining the feeling of security in the husbands whom they deceive.

There are others who lack such assurance. They have languished for a long time, consumed by an evil whose violence has increased day by day; by degrees it has undermined their strength, and slowly exhausted their power of resistance. They have struggled, and they feel that they are defeated. But their recognition of the disgrace of their fall forces them still to struggle; anxious, agitated, they are tortured by remorse. Phaedra would die rather than reveal to Hippolytus the secret of her passion. She is thinking of herself when she says about women who have no scruples:

[1] *Hippol.* 638–644.

[2] *Thesmoph.* 476–519.

[3] See Lallier, *De la condition de la femme dans la famille athénienne*, p. 151 *et seq.*

"How can they . . .
Look ever in the faces of their lords,
Nor shudder lest their dark accomplice, night,
And their own bowers may utter forth a voice?"[1]

The women whose image Euripides has traced in the person of Phaedra are, as has often been said, even more unfortunate than guilty. They are the true victims of Aphrodite.

The poet elsewhere has his characters plead the extenuating circumstances of woman's adultery. This adultery is often caused by the faithlessness of the husband. In the first *Hippolytus*, which differed noticeably from the second, Phaedra defended herself by making the infidelities of Theseus answerable for the love which she had conceived for the Amazon's son.[2] Clytemnestra justifies herself in the same way in the *Electra:* if she has killed Agamemnon in order to marry Aegisthus, it is because Agamemnon returned from Troy with Cassandra, whom he had taken to his couch. And she adds a reflection which is the poet's rather than hers:

"Women be frail: sooth, I deny it not.
But when, this granted, 'tis the husband errs,
Slighting his own bride, and fain the wife
Would copy him and find another love,
Ah then, fierce light of scandal beats us;
But them, which show the way, the men, none blame!"[3]

There is still another excuse for the wrong behavior of woman, —the allurement of evil counsels. An Athenian woman of good standing went abroad only at rare intervals and consequently was not exposed to frequent temptations. But granted that she was almost always at home, she had slaves by her side in the house, servants who kept her in communication with the outside world. These servants who surrounded her often played most detestable rôles. At the moment when Phaedra seems to prefer death to the disgrace of a confession, her nurse, by means of subtle arguments and perfidious suggestions, softens her mistress' feelings, shakes her resolution and tries to overcome the last scruples of her honor. Euripides borrowed this character of Phaedra's nurse from contemporaneous customs and not from poetic tradition. Many a

[1] *Hippol.* 415–418. [2] Plut. *De aud. poet.* 28. [3] *Electra*, 1035–1040.

serving-woman in Athens, so the orators inform us, rendered the same baleful service to her mistress.[1] Besides the servants, women neighbors and friends also plotted against the virtue of married women, either because they had some sin on their own conscience whose gravity they thought they could diminish by making another share it,[2] or because they hoped to gratify their natural curiosity in following the developments of an intrigue which they had plotted and the secret of which they possessed.

> "But never, never—yea, twice o'er I say it,—
> Ought men of wisdom, such as have a wife,
> Suffer that women visit in their halls
> The wife: they are teachers of iniquity."[3]

The licentiousness of women sometimes has a more mysterious cause and one that is harder to fight,—heredity. Only in our day has philosophy applied itself to a scientific study of the phenomena of heredity; but these phenomena, in their commonest form, could not have escaped the attention of the Greeks, who lived in a world in which slavery divided society into two parts, and in which differences of race, of cities and of families were much more marked than they are among us. We shall therefore find Athenian women in whom this vice is hereditary. Euripides thinks that the greatest misfortune that can befall a man is to marry the daughter of a wicked woman: her mother's shame is sure to reappear in her.[4] The husband's honor is then not alone at stake, but—and perhaps this is of still greater importance to him—the future of the children whom he is to have. Children borne by such women will indeed be worthless and without virtue: the poet drastically compares them with plants that grow in swamps.[5] Moreover, whatever the causes or the instincts may be which lead a woman to neglect her duty, Euripides is of the opinion, contrary to the attitude which tradition imputes to him in his own household, that the husband should be relentless: he must punish the culprit, both to avenge his honor and at the

[1] Euripides himself insists on this point when he makes Hippolytus say that a female servant should never approach women, and that one should place only mute animals near them (645–647).

[2] *Andromache*, 948. [3] *Androm.* 943–946. [4] *Androm.* 620.

[5] *Bellerophon*, fragm. 298, Nauck.

same time to set a salutary example. If men, out of regard for their children or for family reasons, spare the wives who disgrace them, their fatal complacency will result in the universal dissemination of evil and in the destruction of virtue.[1]

As the wife is exposed to so many allurements, it would seem that the husband could not guard her too carefully. But Euripides knows women's nature too well not to remind the husband that excessive surveillance is just as dangerous as excessive neglect.

> "There is no stronghold, no, nor treasury—
> There's nought so hard to ward as woman is."[2]

This is so, because the jealous and close surveillance of a wife who thinks of evil is a sort of challenge to her cleverness: the pride of the wife who sees that she is under suspicion is roused, and she is only the more inclined to justify the distrust of which she feels she is the object. The wife, on the other hand, who is virtuous by nature does not need to be guarded: "Even in the midst of the orgies of Bacchus she will preserve her virtue."[3] It is thus natural virtue and not beauty[4] that one must seek for in a wife. Herein Euripides agrees with the comic poets. In a fragment of one of the lost plays he gives the advice not to marry a woman of higher rank than one's own, on pain of becoming her slave.[5]

If he has advice for the husband, he also has admonitions for the wife. The first and the most important of all is to have no desires that conflict with the desires of her husband,—a wise rule, for more than one wife was inclined toward independence. In the Athenian house, from which the husband was almost always absent, the wife was usually the real master: she was entrusted with all the details of the management of the household, she regulated the expenditures, she supervised and directed the slaves, who frequently were numerous. In this exercise of domestic authority, she contracted the habit of commanding, and this habit deluded her into believing that her husband, little as he lent himself to such a part, was nothing more than the first and,

[1] *Melanippe Bound*, fragm. 497.
[2] *Danaè*, fragm. 320. Cf. fragm. incert. 1061.
[3] *Bacchanals*, 317, 318.
[4] *Antiope*, fragm. 212. Cf. Xen. *Oeconom.* x, 1.
[5] *Melanippe Bound*, fragm. 502.

in point of dignity, the highest of her servants. The latter perceived, sometimes too late, that his authority was not properly recognized, and a conflict broke out that was dangerous to the peace of the household. In order to avoid these storms, Euripides would always have the wife yield.[1] For this he gives the following reason: "The existence of a single man is more precious than that of a thousand women;"[2] or again the following:

> "Ever the wife is lower than
> Her lord in true nobility,
> Ay, even though the meanest man
> Have wed a wife of high degree."[3]

Beneath these paradoxical exaggerations there lies hidden a view which was really that of the period. The Greek wife, by her nature, by her education, by the conditions in which she was placed in virtue of the law, was in fact much inferior to her husband. It would have cost her dear to carry her resistance too far and to insist too strenuously on her claim to be obeyed. The menace of divorce perpetually hung over her head; only those women felt somewhat reassured on that score who had brought with them a large dower which the husband would have been obliged to return to their family.[4] As a rule, therefore, the wisest thing for a woman to do was to bow her head and submit. Moreover, her duties were plainly mapped out. On condition that she was skilled in the care of the household, that she rarely appeared in public, and conversed only with the servants,[5] that she strove to please her husband in all matters,[6] and that she did not interfere with his liberty,[7] he might forgive her for her inferiority; he might even forget this inferiority and see in the woman who lived with him not the slave of his wishes, but the companion of his life.

[1] *Electra*, 931, 1052. *Androm.* 213, 214. *Suppl.* 40, 41. *Cretan Women*, fragm. 463. *Oedipus*, fragm. 545. Cf. also verse 16 of a fragment of Euripides, belonging perhaps to the *Temenidae*, published by H. Weil in the *Monuments grecs*, 1879, p. 3 *et seq.* [2] *Iphig. at Aul.* 1394. [3] *Oedipus*, fragm. 546.

[4] Cf. Lallier, *De la condition*, &c., p. 234. *Androm.* 147–153, 209–212.

[5] *Children of Heracles*, 476, 477. *Meleager*, fragm. 521. Fragm. incert. 927, Nauck.

[6] Euripides goes further. He says (fragm. 909) that a husband, though he be ugly, must appear beautiful to his wife if she has *esprit*, and that when he speaks, she must find that he speaks well, even if he speaks badly.

[7] *Orestes*, 605, 606.

The advice which Euripides offers to the women of his day is not always expressed in maxims and sententious precepts; sometimes it takes the form of examples that the poet seems to have wished to offer for the imitation of the women of his time. There are in his dramas female characters whose humble speech, modest conduct, deference and submission to their husbands form a contrast to the customary attitude of other women, of whom they are the living criticism. Of their number is Andromache. In the *Daughters of Troy* Andromache, standing on the shore, awaiting the moment when the Greeks will drag her off into captivity, at first joins in the wailing and the lamentations of Hecuba. Then, becoming calmer, Hector's widow reviews the past, and experiences a sort of satisfaction in doing herself the justice to say that she was never remiss in any of her wifely duties, and that there is nothing for which she should reproach herself in her relations with the husband whom she has lost.

> "All virtuous fame that women e'er have found,
> This was my quest, my gain, 'neath Hector's roof.
> First—be the woman smirched with other stain
> Or be she not—this very thing shall bring
> Ill fame, if one abide not in the house:
> So banished I such craving, kept the house:
> Within my bowers I suffered not to come
> The tinsel-talk of women, lived content
> To be in virtue schooled by mine own heart;
> With silent tongue, with quiet eye, still met
> My lord; knew in what matters I should rule
> And where 'twas meet to yield him victory."[1]

There is no doubt that in this passage Euripides desired to sketch the model of a wife in the person of Andromache. The picture is completed by still other traits. In the tragedy which bears her name, Andromache stands before Hermione, the wife of Neoptolemus. Proud of her luxury, of her wealth and of her family, Hermione has, through her imperious haughtiness, become unbearable to her husband; he has turned away from her, and henceforward loves the Trojan captive, the widow of Hector. The latter is animated by feelings so proper and so much

[1] *Daughters of Troy*, 645 *et seq.*

in harmony with her position, and at the same time so full of dignity, that her rôle becomes the most important in the play; her character attracts the sympathy which Hermione's estranges. With reason, therefore, it has been thought that the poet intended in this play to contrast the wife and the mistress: the audience was to draw the conclusion that the mistress who keeps her place makes herself more agreeable to the man than the legitimate wife who forgets hers. But we need not delay on this interpretation: what we are searching for in Andromache is the type of the wife. Reduced to captivity, forced to share the couch of a new lord, Andromache dwells upon the memory of her past. It is her former married life, the means she employed to make herself beloved, that she places as an example before Hermione, who has not known how to attach Neoptolemus to her. She recalls her former indulgence for all Hector's weaknesses, — indulgence which she carried to the extent of complete self-forgetfulness:

> "Ah, dear, dear Hector, I would take to my heart
> Even thy leman, if Love tripped thy feet.
> Yea, often to thy bastards would I hold
> My breast, that I might give thee none offence.
> So doing, I drew with cords of wifely love
> My lord."[1]

We may think that the poet goes too far and that he here places on the lips of Andromache sentiments that hardly any woman's heart could entertain. But Andromache is not a Greek, she is an Asiatic; she is, if we may say so, a woman of the harem, by nature submissive and resigned, one of those who even when they are the favorites of their master must allow rivals by their sides. Andromache is only a barbarian; but, to the poet's thinking, this barbarian woman might have served as a model to more than one Greek wife.

Between a passionate criticism of woman's faults and a panegyric of her virtues, there is room for the more moderate judgment which makes due allowance for the good and for the bad. Euripides rarely[2] submits to these just bounds. Only once he seems formally to contradict his usual opinions; in a fragment of the *Protesilaus* he says:

[1] *Androm.* 222 *et seq.*

[2] *Hecuba*, 1185, 1186. *Alcmaeon*, fragm. 78.

> "The man who in one censure comprehends
> All women alike, a fool is he, not wise;
> For, among many, one shalt thou find bad,
> Another, like this woman, noble-souled."[1]

We should like to know when Euripides wrote these verses, which are a tacit criticism of his usual methods of passing judgment on women. But the date of the *Protesilaus* is not known.

It would be interesting to be able to answer the question which is here naturally suggested. To what period belong the severest accusations the poet has made against the women of his time? If we could prove that at a certain moment in his career he began to speak ill of women, after having previously spared them, we should have an indication that would be instructive in studying the development of his ideas and sentiments. A change of sentiment in regard to women, of which the date could be determined, would strengthen the view of those who claim that Euripides was unhappy in his married relations and that this is the explanation of his aversion to women. Only a statistical investigation, made with due regard to chronology, could furnish an answer to this question; the following are its results. The earliest tragedy in which women are harshly treated is the *Cretan Women;* this was a part of the same trilogy as the *Alcestis*, and was performed in 438. The last play in which we find malicious sayings about women is the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, a work of the poet's old age, which was performed in 405, one year after his death. Between 438 and 406 thirty-two years elapsed; after an interval of thirty-two years Euripides had not changed his mind. In this interval criticism of women often recurs, and in a large number of plays whose dates are not far apart; or specifically — to cite only plays whose dates are fixed — in the *Medea*, which was performed in 431; in the *Hippolytus Crowned*, which was performed in 428; in the *Daughters of Troy*, whose date is 415; in the *Orestes*, which belongs to 408.[2] It appears from these statistics that the various elements of a satire upon women which occur in Euri-

[1] *Protesil.* fragm. 657.

[2] The other plays in which we find criticism of women, but whose dates are uncertain, are: *Alope*, *Andromache*, *Aeolus*, *Danaè*, *Hecuba*, *Ion*, *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, *Melanippe Bound*, *Meleager*, *Oedipus*, *Phoenician Maidens*, *Stheneboea*.

pides' plays belong to all the periods of his life. At no time does he seem to have changed his opinion on this subject.

His plays must be read with great attention, in order to discover in them the expression of views favorable to women. Such views are met with as rarely in the fragments of his lost tragedies as in the extant plays. Did he, in fact, never cease to be hostile to women? Or must we assume that, as satire is always more relished than praise, the compilers and the authors of anthologies to whom we owe the fragments of the lost plays found it more interesting to gather the passages in which the poet had spoken ill of women than to collect those in which he may have spoken well of them? Perhaps there is some truth in this last supposition. But in a general way it may be affirmed that Euripides showed himself to be without pity for the vices and the transgressions of women, and that it was hard for him to do justice to their virtues. Sometimes, however, he did recognize them. A poet who, after the example of the sophists, loved to discuss the *pro* and the *contra*, who delighted in opposing the thesis to the antithesis, could not fail to contradict himself here and there on the subject of women, as on other subjects. But these contradictions are rare. In two very short fragments, one from the *Andromeda*, the other from the *Antigone*, we read that for man the best wealth, the most precious prize, is a virtuous wife, who shares his feelings (συμπαθὴς γυνή).[1] This idea is developed a little further elsewhere. The poet speaks of the wise and sensible wife who saves the home that has been compromised by the husband's folly; of the devoted wife whose affection is a support for her husband in his weakness, a consolation in his suffering.[2] Of these fragments the following must be quoted:

> "Glad is she, if aught untoward chance, to show she feels his care;
> Joy and sorrow of the husband aye the loving wife will bear.
> Yea, if thou be sick, in spirit will thy wife be sick with thee,
> Bear the half of all thy burdens — nought unsweet accounteth she."[3]

These are very beautiful verses, and they express a touching and delicate sentiment which at that time had nothing banal about

[1] Fragm. 137, 164. [2] *Phrixus*, fragm. 822, 823. Cf. fragm. incert. 1055.
[3] Fragm. incert. 909, verse 9 *et seq.*

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it. But this is almost the only expression of this sentiment in the plays of Euripides.[1]

There is, however, one play, in which we might be tempted to see a glorification of woman, the *Alcestis*. But the heroism of Admetus' wife is of so extraordinary a kind, her unparalleled devotion is accompanied by such marvellous circumstances, that this divine woman has nothing in common with reality and lives entirely in the supernatural world of legend. Alcestis, whose tomb was destined to be honored like the sanctuary of a god, who deserves to sit by the side of Persephone in the nether world,[2] is a unique exception among women, and the poet cannot have thought of generalizing this exception.[3] We must therefore be content simply to admit that, if Euripides thought well of women at all, he almost always kept his views to himself. The cause for his aversion must be sought for less in his own domestic afflictions—which, as we have said, are by no means proved—than in the alarming progress which at that time the authority of women was making in Athenian households, in the melancholy mood of the poet, and in his peculiar turn of mind, which was quicker to discover and point out the bad in all things than to perceive and reveal the good.

II

CRITICISM OF SOCIAL PREJUDICES

THE NOBILITY

THE COMMON PEOPLE

THE SLAVES

He manifests the same tendencies in his criticism of social differences. In Athens, the most democratic of the Greek cities, there were great folk and humble folk, men of high birth (εὐγενεῖς) and men of low birth (δυσγενεῖς). Euripides resolutely takes sides with the latter against the former. Sometimes he shows pity for people

[1] It is expressed, except in the passage quoted, only in a fragment published by H. Weil, in 1879, *Monuments grecs* (*Un papyrus inédit*, etc.), pp. 2–6.

[2] *Alcestis*, 745, 746, 996, 1003.

[3] The aged Pheres says, it is true, that the glory of Alcestis' devotion reflects credit on all women (623); but the chorus had maliciously observed (474) that a woman such as she is a rare prize.

of high station, those whose life is controlled by pride, who are the slaves of their rank, who dare not express all their thoughts and are not even at liberty to weep.[1] But if he sometimes pities, he never admires them. What people call high birth (εὐγένεια) appears to him to be an absolutely empty thing.[2] The great families of Greece sought to justify their nobility by choosing a god or a hero as their ancestor. The poet is not himself the dupe of such fables, and he ruthlessly destroys these delusions or pretensions when others entertain them. He places neither a god nor a goddess at the beginning of families, but a common mother, the Earth.

> "Earth made all alike in outward show;
> All differences did fancy frame.
> Nought do we really own; the same
> In nature are the high and low."[3]

In his eyes, nobility, as the common people understand it, has nothing but wealth as its origin and foundation. It is because wealth has abided long in certain houses that in course of time they have become noble.[4] But what is the moral value of wealth? Whereas poverty strains all the powers of human energy, luxury is a school of effeminacy and cowardice; whereas want awakens and brightens the poor man's intelligence, the rich seem to be doomed to intellectual mediocrity.

> "For blockishness goes hand in hand with wealth,
> And poverty for birthright wisdom gains."[5]

We foresee the poet's conclusion. Nobility consists neither in wealth nor in the claim to illustrious ancestors. The nobleman is the honest man (ἐσθλός); the man without honesty is not noble, "even though he be descended from a father greater than Zeus."[6]

True nobility may therefore be met with in the poor man, in the man of the people. In his *Orestes* Euripides shows us one of

[1] *Iphig. at Aul.* 446 *et seq.*

[2] This evidently does not prevent some of his characters from vaunting the advantages of εὐγένεια (*Ino*, fragm. 405, Nauck; *Temenidae*, fragm. 739) and from regarding δυσγένεια as a blot (*Peliades*, fragm. 617).

[3] *Alexander*, fragm. 52, verses 4–7, Nauck.

[4] *Aeolus*, fragm. 22.

[5] *Polyidus*, fragm. 641. Cf. *Alex.* fragm. 54, 55; and the ironical reflections on the power of money in *Andromeda*, fragm. 142; *Alcmena*, fragm. 95; *Danaè*, fragm. 324, 326 (on parvenus), etc.

[6] *Dictys*, fragm. 336.

these honest and intelligent laborers—more than one of whom could certainly have been found in Athens—as he comes into the popular assembly, where he is not accustomed to speak, but where his common sense will be a good substitute for eloquence. Like La Fontaine's Peasant of the Danube,

> "No dainty presence, but a manful man,
> In town and market-circle seldom found,
> A yeoman—such as are the land's one stay,—
> Yet shrewd in grapple of words, when this he would;
> A stainless man, who lived a blameless life."[1]

Euripides did not limit himself to this short sketch. He has elsewhere succeeded in portraying more completely this type of the honest man, sprung from the people. In attributing in his *Electra* a noble part to a peasant, a mere laborer, he desired to point out that the most generous soul may dwell under the roughest covering.

This peasant in the *Electra* is one of his innovations on the stage,—a secondary character, without importance for the action, but one whose attitude is striking and surprising. It is he who speaks the prologue. At first he recalls what everybody knows: the murder of Agamemnon, the criminal union of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, Orestes' departure for Phocis. He then informs the public of things which they do not know, which are not borrowed from tradition, but which the poet invented with the intention of rejuvenating an old subject. Electra, when she had arrived at a marriageable age, was asked in marriage by the first men of Greece. Aegisthus, dreading lest she should bear an avenger, refused to marry her to a man of his own rank: he gave her to a man of the people, a poor peasant from whom he had nothing to fear. He hoped thus to degrade and to disgrace her. But it happened that this man of low station had a lofty soul. When he received from the hands of Aegisthus a wife of whom he did not feel himself worthy, he resolved to respect the daughter of kings: he never shared her couch; to Electra he is an humble protector, a friend of lower rank, and nothing more. Electra,

[1] *Orestes*, 918 *et seq.* The poet in other plays remarks that the poor and the humble sometimes have more common sense than the rich and the mighty (*Danaè*, fragm. 327; *Daughters of Troy*, 411, 412).

for her part, is full of gratitude for so generous a renunciation, and contrives to be of service to the man whose home she shares and to lighten his toil. In a short scene, which has nothing tragic about it, we see her go out, before daybreak, with a pitcher on her head, to fetch water at the spring near by, while her companion leads his oxen into the fields. The poet brings before our eyes the early morning life of a peasant household. Presently Orestes, who has just arrived, finds his sister weeping not far from Agamemnon's tomb and calling for an avenger. He enters into conversation with her and gains her confidence by telling her that he brings news of her brother. Electra then explains to the stranger her situation; she informs him that she is married and shows him the house in which she lives, a solitary cabin in the country. "That," says Orestes, "is the dwelling of a laborer or drover." And Electra replies: "Yes, he who dwells here is poor, but he has a noble soul and he respects me."[1] The peasant, who is not long in returning, promptly offers Orestes and Pylades the most cordial hospitality at his humble hearth. On seeing this large-hearted man of whose behavior he knows, Orestes is moved and at the same time astonished. It is chiefly his astonishment that he expresses, in rather too abstract a fashion and too sententious a tone, in the following passage:

> "Lo, there is no sure test for manhood's worth;
> For mortal natures are confusion-fraught.
> I have seen ere now a noble father's son
> Proved nothing-worth, seen good sons of ill sires,
> Starved leanness in a rich man's very soul,
> And in a poor man's body a great heart. . . .
> For this man is not among Argives great,
> Nor by a noble house's name exalted,
> But one of the many — proved a king of men!"[2]

Orestes reasons a great deal for a dramatic personage; but this fault makes us sure of finding here that of which we are in search — the personal thought of the poet. It is likewise Euripides, and not Orestes, who addresses this apostrophe to the public: "Will you not be cured of your folly, you who are filled with empty prejudices and misled by them, and will you not learn to judge men's

[1] *Electra*, 252, 253.

[2] *Electra*, 367–382.

nobility by their habits and by their conduct in daily life?"[1] After these fine words, Orestes finally enters into the cabin, declaring that he prefers the hospitality of the poor to that of the rich, and that he congratulates himself upon being received by this simple man at his hearth. Nowhere is the poet's intention more evident. He has undertaken to raise the man of the people, especially the countryman, above the unjust prejudice of which he was the object. He desired—a thing that none of his predecessors had done—to exalt the virtue of the humble in the person of this peasant, Electra's husband, who for his noble conduct deserves to walk side by side with the tragic heroes.

Our poet has a soul that is tender and full of pity for poor people. He bears the gods ill will for not detesting (that is the word he uses) the great and the noble,[2] and for keeping the miseries of life for that nameless crowd that works and suffers in obscurity, for those whom he designates by a very expressive term, with a meaning then new to the language, οἱ ἀναρίθμητοι, "those who do not count."[3] What people call military glory does not dazzle him, because he knows of what that glory consists, and that to make a single great warrior thousands of humble lives must be sacrificed.[4]

His compassion goes still further: it extends to the most despised objects in Greek society, to the slaves. Not that he closed his eyes to their vices, nor that he failed to point out their moral degradation; his characters sometimes express the accepted opinion on this subject.[5] But the slave whose life is governed by instinct only, for whom "the belly is everything,"[6] the slave in whom fear of his master kills generous emotions, whom it makes cowardly and treacherous,[7] in his eyes deserves less to be hated than to be pitied. Euripides' pity is roused by the miserable condition of these creatures who, though they are men, have been doomed by the gods to be content with the worst lot in this world.[8]

[1] *Electra*, 383 *et seq.* [2] *Helen*, 1678. [3] *Helen*, 1679. Cf. *Ion*, 837.

[4] *Andromache*, 694: "When an army erects a trophy of the spoils of the enemy the victory is not regarded as belonging to those who have toiled in the battle, but their general reaps all the honor."

[5] *Antiope*, fragm. 217. Fragm. incert. 976, Nauck.

[6] *Alexander*, fragm. 49.

[7] *Electra*, 632. *Ion*, 983. *Orestes*, 110–115. *Alcmaeon*, fragm. 86. *Alex.* fragm. 50.

[8] *Antiope*, fragm. 218.

Obliged to gratify in every way those who own them, often constrained to lie in order to be agreeable to them, deprived of the right of speaking and thinking freely, without friends, without support, objects of contempt, submitted to insults—to those among them who have known liberty, death is preferable to such an existence.[1] Of what consequence, moreover, is a slave's life to the common run of men? It does not count.[2] Euripides would have that life count. He knows that the freeman cannot get along without slaves in Greece,[3] but he hopes to have the slave share, to a certain degree, in the rights of the freeman. In order to preach by example, he introduces him on the stage by the side of heroes; he engages him in the action of his dramas more frequently than the other tragic authors did. In Euripides—it is Aristophanes who calls attention to it—the slave speaks with as much right as his master:[4] like the latter, he often has moral maxims and philosophical arguments on his lips.[5] Sometimes he even gives evidence of so much cleverness and intelligence that he becomes troublesome to his owner.[6] The poet regards the prejudice which separates the slave from the rest of Greek society as an odious prejudice, and does not tire of fighting it. We are astonished, in reading him, to see for the first time words placed together in the Greek language which previously would have seemed contradictory: the words γενναῖος (noble) and δοῦλος (slave).[7] We are surprised to hear the poet repeat that the slave, who without having the name of a freeman often has his feelings, is the victim of a word, of a convention,[8] and dare to declare that there are many slaves who are worth more morally than some freemen.[9]

[1] *Alcmena*, fragm. 93. *Busir.* fragm. 313. *Antiope*, fragm. 216. *Androm.* 186, 187. *Phoen. Maidens*, 392. *Iphig. at Aul.* 313. *Ion*, 674, 675. *Androm.* 136–139, 327, 328. *Hecuba*, 349, 358. *Daught. of Troy*, 302. *Archelaus*, fragm. 245.

[2] *Androm.* 89. [3] Fragm. 1019, Nauck. [4] *Frogs*, 949.

[5] *Acharnians*, 401. Cf. in the *Helen* (744 *et seq.*) the messenger's reflections about soothsaying. This messenger is a fine thinker.

[6] *Alexander*, fragm. 48, 51. *Archel.* fragm. 251.

[7] *Helen*, 729, 730. In the relations of master to servant, the poet would like to suppress the appellation δεσπότης, which humiliates the servant too much, and to keep it for the gods (*Hippol.* 88).

[8] *Ion*, 854, 855. *Hel.* 730. *Phrixus*, fragm. 831. *Alex.* fragm. 57.

[9] *Melanippe Bound*, fragm. 511, and verses 40–43 of a fragment of the same play coming from an Egyptian papyrus, published by Blass in 1880 (*Rhein. Mus.*

In order that the lesson which he teaches on this subject may be more striking, he has the characters in his dramas put into practice the views which he himself professes. Creusa, "queen that she is," honors "like a father" the aged pedagogue who has watched over the childhood of Erechtheus.[1] Alcestis, when at the point of death, bids farewell to the servants of her house: she holds out her hand to each of them; there is none too humble for her to address. And these good people disperse in the palace weeping and groaning: in Alcestis they lose not only, so they say, the best of mistresses,—they lose "a mother."[2] That is a word which corresponds with a feeling which we should be tempted to think Christian, did we not meet with it in Euripides. Clearly such ideas as these could not be expressed in the theatre without some degree of assent on the part of public opinion: perhaps it was possible to hear them expressed only in that humane city of Athens which was the first to make laws protecting slaves.[3] Nevertheless it is probably true that when Euripides sought to elevate and to honor the slave, when, without taking account of any social distinctions, he placed all noble souls and all generous hearts on the same level, he was in accord with only a few of the best of his contemporaries, and in advance of his times.

vol. xxxv, p. 200). Cf. H. Weil, *Revue de Philologie*, vol. iv, pp. 121–124. This is fragm. 495, Nauck.

[1] *Ion*, 733, 734.

[2] *Alcestis*, 769, 770. Cf. 192.

[3] There is an allusion to these laws in the *Hecuba*, 291, 292.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL VIEWS OF EURIPIDES

I

THE DOMESTIC POLITICS OF ATHENS

SOPHOCLES, the saying goes, was twice general: Euripides was nothing, and did not wish to be anything. Secluded at home, among his books and friends, he did not act—he observed action. He was one of those honest men of whom his Ion speaks, who are thoroughly competent to engage successfully in politics, but of their own choice keep aloof; who are loath to enter into the strife of affairs, having neither enough audacity to force their way through the throng of rival ambitions, nor enough contempt for their fellowmen to brave the combined hatred of the envious and of the mediocre, who are annoyed by all superiority.[1] A sort of poet's and philosopher's modesty made him fear dangerous associations and the corruption of discreditable compromises.[2] Although he too might have had a part in the direction of public affairs, he preferred to abstain, at the risk of arousing doubt about his civic spirit, and—like Amphion in his tragedy *Antiope*—of allowing his Muse to be accused of being a slothful and useless Muse.[3] Nothing, however, would have been less justifiable than this reproach. Euripides kept aloof neither from egotism nor from indifference, although he had a certain taste for repose.[4] As archon, or as the leader of a party, he might perhaps have rendered some service to the state; he rendered greater service by remaining what he was, a dramatic poet whose dramas give evidence of his interest in current events. He did not speak in the agora; but, in another place and before an immense audience, he incidentally brought forward some of the problems which engaged the public mind, criticised prevailing ideas, and expressed opinions upon the political questions of the day. Euripides did not limit himself, as Sophocles did, to passing allusions to contemporary events: he

[1] *Ion*, 595 *et seq.* *Medea*, 301. *Bellerophon*, fragm. 294, Nauck.

[2] Fragm. 910.

[3] Fragm. 184; 187, 3 *et seq.* Cf. *Medea*, 296, 297.

[4] *Ion*, 634: "Leisure is the dearest thing that man has." *Antiope*, fragm. 193.

wrote plays—the *Children of Heracles*, the *Suppliants*—which deal directly with existing political conditions. Was this not his way of intervening, more or less effectively, in the affairs of the city? Did he not regard his rôle of poet as a sort of public function?

There are political allusions here and there in the plays of Euripides, but we must be on our guard against finding them everywhere. Certain glaring errors of both ancient and modern criticism warn us of the danger there is in this search for political allusions, of excessive penetration, and also how easy it is to get lost on false scents. Socrates was hale and hearty and still far from the grave when Euripides brought out his *Palamedes*;[1] this fact did not prevent ingenious minds from subsequently discovering that two verses of the *Palamedes* contained a sharp reproach addressed by the poet to the Athenians who had condemned Socrates to death.[2] Cleon had descended into Hades long before the time of the performance of the *Orestes;* and yet a verse of the *Orestes* subsequently appeared to some critics to be a plain denunciation of the underhand practices of that celebrated demagogue.[3] But the chronological blunders of the ancients do not approach those of the German scholar Hartung, who in his *Euripides Restitutus* has carried the art of guessing to the extreme. That art led him, by a series of clever deductions, to date the *Chrysippus* in the year 441, the *Oenomaus* in 418, and the *Phoenician Maidens* in 408. Hartung's views might have been accepted, had not the discovery of a didascalia of the *Phoenician Maidens* demolished the entire support of his reasoning; this informs us that the three tragedies which this clever critic separated, on such excellent grounds, by such intervals were performed, in fact, in the same year and offered in the same competition.[4] An example like this is calculated to inspire caution. It is in this spirit that we, in our turn, shall approach the question.[5]

[1] The play was performed in 415, with the *Daughters of Troy*. Ael. *Hist. Var.* ii, 8. Schol. Aristoph. *Wasps*, 1317.

[2] Diog. Laert. ii, 44. Philochorus, quoted by Diogenes, called attention to the fact that Euripides died before Socrates. [3] Schol. *Orestes*, 903.

[4] Aristophanes the Grammarian, argument of the *Phoenician Maidens*.

[5] For the study of political allusions in Euripides, see Le Beau, *Mém. sur les tragiques grecs* (*Acad. des Inscript.* vol. xxxv, pp. 443–449, 458–474); Boeckh,

Aeschylus and Sophocles occasionally extolled democracy, and contrasted the rule of liberty which prevailed in Athens with the oligarchies or tyrannies which pressed heavily upon other peoples. This was not the result of calculation, as we prefer to believe; they did not desire to be applauded, but to inspire the people with confidence in itself and in the institutions which it had created. The expression of this view, however, is quite rare in their plays: it is of more frequent occurrence in Euripides. We must not allow ourselves to be deceived by apparent contradictions. We read in a fragment of the *Antiope*:

> "One prudent counsel conquers many hands;
> But folly joined with numbers is a curse."[1]

But this fragment formed part of a debate, and the speaker's object was to glorify the power of the mind and to proclaim its superiority over brute physical force. Similarly, when the chorus of the *Andromache* declares "that a numerous gathering of wise men is not as able to govern a city as the will of one man who is in sole command, though he be a man of small ability,"[2] these words are rather the corroboration of a fact than the expression of a hope. Moreover they were pronounced not before the suspicious Athenian public, but on the stage of a foreign theatre.[3] Much later Euripides says that royalty has only the gods above it, that it lacks only one thing—immortality.[4] But at that time he was over seventy years old and lived at the Macedonian court; we can excuse this bit of flattery on the part of an old man who was the cherished guest of Archelaus.

During many years, the characters in his dramas had not missed an opportunity to declare their love of liberty and their hatred of absolute power. One of them says: "Cursed be all those who rejoice to see the city in the hands of a single man or under the yoke of a few men! The name of freeman is the most precious of all

Graec. trag. princ. p. 180; Zirndorfer, *Chronol. fabul. Euripid.* (Marburg, 1839); Th. Fix, Preface to the *Euripides* in the collection of Didot, p. v; H. Weil, *De trag. gr. cum rebus publicis conjunctione;* and above all, K. Schenkl, *Die politischen Anschauungen des Euripides* (*Zeitschrift f. d. österr. Gymnasien*, 1862, vol. iv).

[1] Fragm. 200. [2] *Andromache*, 480–484. [3] Schol. *Androm.* 445.

[4] *Archelaus*, fragm. 250. Hecuba, in the tragedy which bears her name (1169), says that royalty is equal to the state of the gods. But it is a barbarian that speaks.

titles: to possess it is to have much, even when one has little."[1] Tyranny, "that triumphant injustice,"[2] he paints in the blackest colors. He shows us the man who aspires to it marching to his goal through a thousand base acts, a thousand betrayals, rushing through blood to the destruction of the law.[3] He shows him to us, when he has once become master, forced to maintain his authority by the most detestable means, doomed to have only the most depraved men as the tools of his will.[4] All the citizens tremble before the man whom they enrich by their toil only to have him come and demand their daughters for his caprices, their sons for his wars, destined to be mowed down by the sword like the flowers of a field in spring.[5] Euripides' Lycus—who, in order to reach the throne, has killed Creon, and, in possession of the throne, wishes to kill the wife and children of Heracles—is the type of those fierce tyrants whose sway the Athenians seemed to fear might return in Greece under cover of civil discord.[6] But they feared more for others than for themselves, for these bloodthirsty monsters were foreign to Attica. Attica also in earlier days had had her tyrants, but only good ones. The ancient kings of Athens, Erechtheus, Theseus, Demophon, are in Euripides' plays what they are everywhere else in Athenian tradition,—excellent rulers.[7] When Theseus appears, he seems less like a monarch than an archon; he is so good a prince that he himself with his royal hands founded the democracy of Attica. Again, with what pride he extols, before the herald of the tyrant Creon, the merits of that rule of liberty which allows indeed each citizen to speak on the affairs of state, gives the same rights to all, grants to all without distinction the *isonomia* that was so precious and so much lauded, but permits no other

[1] *Augè*, fragm. 275.

[2] *Phoenician Maidens*, 549.

[3] *Iphig. in Taur.* 678–681. *Iphig. at Aul.* 337–342, 450. *Heracles*, 65, 66. *Hecuba*, 868. *Antigone*, fragm. 171.

[4] *Ion*, 626 *et seq.*

[5] *Suppl.* 447–455, von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff.

[6] In the *Heracles* the idea is several times expressed (33, 34, 272, 273, 541–543) that the tyrant has taken advantage of the dissensions in the city to get the power into his own hands.

[7] The ideal of the good king is portrayed in the words which the dying Erechtheus addresses to his son (fragm. 362). Schenkl (*Die polit. Anschauungen des Euripides*, etc., p. 32) has compared with it the advice that Isocrates gives to Nicocles, king of Salamis in Cyprus.

sovereign than the law to rule in the city.[1] Creon's herald, it is true, makes some incontestably just criticisms of the democratic institutions of Athens. But he is a Theban and is sent by a king: he is in the wrong. Theseus is an Athenian and the representative of a free people: he crushes his adversary.

Euripides satisfied his audience and was probably sincere when he praised the worth of the political institutions of Athens before foreigners, but he seems not to have shut his eyes to the disadvantages of a system which left public affairs in the hands of the multitude. He does not fawn upon the masses; on the contrary he draws a picture of them which, without at all resembling the Aristophanic caricature of good old Demus, is not flattering and merely seeks faithfully to reproduce its model. A fickle lot, prompt to thoughtless impulses of anger and of pity; powerless to master their ambition, which aspires to the unattainable and makes them lose in a day the results of prolonged effort; ignorant, and following their leader blindly, so that the fortune of the state depends on him who knows how to gain their confidence; creating favorites without reason, only to sacrifice them subsequently to their whims,[2]—such, according to our poet, are the Athenian people.[3] Learned in "the knowledge of political maladies"—the phrase is Plutarch's[4]—Euripides discerned what afflicted Athens. Not to mention passing allusions to that moral perversity of the Greeks of which Thucydides, at about the same time, has left us such a striking picture,[5] the poet points out and loudly denounces the men who do all the harm: the restless, mischievous adventurers, whose audacity impresses the common people, and who push themselves forward and lay violent hands on places and honors.[6] Among them are found the sons of ruined fa-

[1] *Suppl.* 433–440. Cf. Herodotus, iii, 80.

[2] *Orestes*, 702, 772. *Suppl.* 417, 418, 728–730. *Iphig. at Aul.* 367–369.

[3] Cf. Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxxv, 36, 4: picture of the Athenian people by Parrhasius.

[4] *Life of Sulla*, iv, 5. Plutarch, it is true, alludes chiefly to the advice which Iocasta gives to Eteocles in the *Phoenician Maidens*, 531 *et seq.* But we may properly give his remark a wider significance.

[5] Book iii, 82–84. Compare especially 82, 3–8 with fragment 434 of the *Hippolytus Veiled.*

[6] *Hecuba*, 306–308. *Androm.* 699, 700. *Ion*, 636, 637. *Temenidae*, fragm. 738. *Philoct.* fragm. 788. *Erechtheus*, fragm. 362, verses 29–31.

milies, who hope to mend their private fortunes by plundering the public treasure.[1] Others—and they are the majority—are nothing by birth, but aspire to everything.[2] To that end they must beguile the people, and their only means is words. Euripides is full of contempt for the "detestable brood" of these flatterers of the crowd, for the easy success of these popular orators, whose intemperate language is the ruin of the state, whose unscrupulous eloquence lives on lies and calumnies.[3] Odysseus, who secures the condemnation of an innocent man to death by means of odious machinations supported by fair speeches, is the type of the harmful demagogue in the *Palamedes*.[4] One of them rises to speak in the midst of a popular assembly which occurs in the *Orestes*, "an unbridled babbler strong in his audacity, an interloper who has stormed the gates of the city, full of confidence in the noise that he makes and in the untutored freedom of his language, and of whom one can believe that he will yet bring some disaster upon the republic."[5] In these traits the spectators recognized a figure with which they were familiar: Cleophon, an implacable enemy of peace,[6] one of the worthy successors of Cleon in the people's favor.

Euripides therefore is not to be suspected of affection for the demagogues. He deplores that the masses should allow themselves to be carried by such leaders to the extremes whose effects upon the country he dreads. He could wish that the people had not all the power in their grasp, but not, as in the past, that the power of the people should be made of no effect by the rich, because the rich and the poor have need of one another and ought to participate in about equal measure in public affairs.[7] He contrasts the rich, who do not know how to make themselves useful and who think only of increasing their riches, with those who pos-

[1] *Heracles*, 588 *et seq.* [2] *Suppl.* 425.

[3] *Hecuba*, 254. *Hippol.* 986 *et seq.* *Antiope*, fragm. 219. *Ion*, 832–834. *Medea*, 580–583. *Daughters of Troy*, 967, 968. *Suppl.* 412, 413.

[4] He has the same character in the *Daughters of Troy*, 282 *et seq.*; in the *Hecuba*, 131–133, 254 *et seq.*; in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 526.

[5] *Orestes*, 903–906, and schol. 903.

[6] Schol. *Orestes*, 772. According to Philochorus, quoted by the scholiast, Cleophon, two years before the production of the *Orestes*, had prevented the conclusion of peace. Cleophon is also one of Aristophanes' *bêtes noires*.

[7] *Pleisthenes*, fragm. 626. *Aeolus*, fragm. 21.

sess nothing, whom poverty renders malignant and envious, whose ignorance puts them at the mercy of depraved men; and he concludes by saying that it is the duty of those citizens who are placed between these two extremes, of the middle class (οἱ ἐν μέσῳ), to save the state by maintaining in it the established order.[1] In the riot of party violence, Euripides still imagines a system of just equilibrium and of even balance: in politics he belongs to the respectable party of the moderates.

We conclude from these views that if he ever was an admirer of Alcibiades, he did not long persist in his admiration. Euripides is said to have eulogized a brilliant victory won by him at the Olympic Games.[2] Although the fact is not well established,[3] we may admit that the poet was at a certain time, like all Athens, under the seduction of the son of Cleinias; but that he was yoked to his chariot remains doubtful. The tragedy of the *Suppliants* no doubt contains allusions to Alcibiades that nobody calls into question: the alliance recently entered into by Athens and Argos was, in fact, his work. But these allusions appear to be contradictory. On the one hand, Adrastus says to Theseus that Athens is fortunate in having in him a young and valiant leader.[4] On the other hand, the poet places on Theseus' lips a very lively criticism of the behavior of the youths who take part in public affairs. He says to Adrastus:

> "So ruinedst thy state,
> By young men led astray, which love the praise
> Of men, and multiply wars wrongfully,
> Corrupting others, one, to lead the host,
> One, to win power, and use it for his lust,
> And one for lucre's sake, who recketh nought
> Of mischief to a people thus misused."[5]

[1] *Suppl.* 238 *et seq.*

[2] The date of this victory, which would also be a date in Euripides' career, is not given in any ancient author. Grote (vol. ix, p. 314), Hertzberg (*Alcibiades*, p. 99), followed by M. H. Houssaye (*Hist. d'Alcibiade*, vol. i, p. 317), place this victory in Ol. 90, 1 = 420. But this is only an approximation.

[3] Plutarch, who relates this tradition in his *Life of Alcibiades* (chap. 11), without criticising it, says, in the *Life of Demosthenes*, 1: "He who composed the eulogy in honor of Alcibiades' victory in the chariot races at Olympia, whether it was Euripides, as is generally believed, *or another*" . . . .

[4] *Suppl.* 190 *et seq.*

[5] *Suppl.* 231–237.

Alcibiades, with his followers, is not less clearly indicated here than he was indicated singly in the preceding passage. But how can he be regarded, in turn, as an excellent leader and as an ambitious man without scruples? This contradiction can be explained only by agreeing with several critics that the first passage quoted is an interpolation: we need not now take into account the verses which precede that are not Euripides'.[1] It seems therefore that the latter, notwithstanding the great service Alcibiades had just done his country, wished neither to flatter nor to glorify him; that on the contrary he thought it well to put the public on their guard against him and against the alarming turbulence of the young men who made up his retinue.[2] Alcibiades' policy, which was thereafter audacious and knavish,[3] could not be the ideal of Euripides, who wished a prudent policy[4] and who no doubt dreamed of an honest one.

Is there, in the celebrated passage about the exiles in the *Phoenician Maidens*,[5] a sympathetic allusion to the recall and return of Alcibiades? We do not think so. Polyneices, whom his mother Iocasta asks what kind of suffering is peculiar to exile, resembles Alcibiades in one particular: like him, he has been banished. But here the similarity ends. There is no possible relation between the triumphant return of Alcibiades, who came back to Athens in 407 as the vanquisher of his country's enemies, and the return of Polyneices, who in the play comes before Thebes at the head of a foreign army and enters its gates only under cover of an armistice. Furthermore, does the chronology of Euripides' life permit us to assume an allusion of this kind? Alcibiades landed at the Piraeus on the 25th of the month Thargelion (the beginning of May): the tragic performances of which the *Phoenician Maidens* formed

[1] W. Dindorf regards 184–192 as interpolated, and he gives good reasons for it (*Eurip.* vol. iii, *Annotationes*, p. 394). Kirchhoff and Nauck likewise cut them out. They are retained only by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (edition of the *Suppliants*, in his *Analecta Euripidea*).

[2] Cf. *Suppl.* 160, *νέων ἀνδρῶν θόρυβος.* and verse 507.

[3] See Thucydides (v, 43) as to the way in which Alcibiades fooled the Lacedaemonian ambassadors.

[4] *Suppl.* 508, 509.

[5] Verses 388–399. It is known that Plutarch, in his treatise on *Exile* (pp. 599 d, 605 f, 606), has commented upon and criticised these verses. Cf. Stob. *Floril.* xxxiv, 17.

a part must therefore have taken place at the great Dionysiac festival in the month of Elaphebolion (March–April) of the following year. Who does not see that an allusion made eleven months after the event would have been without interest? Moreover, this supposition places the performance of the *Phoenician Maidens* in the year 406, when Euripides was already with Archelaus in Macedonia. But is it possible to suppose that the allusion did not come after the event, but preceded it; that the play was performed at a time when Alcibiades had not yet come back, but when the minds of all were full of him and his return was impatiently expected? This hypothesis agrees no better than the other with what we know of Euripides' last years. Between the time when the poet, on this supposition, would have left Athens and his death,[1] hardly a year and a half would have elapsed. This interval is too short to include both his sojourn in Magnesia and his residence at the court of Macedonia, where he lived long enough to be able to compose or to complete four of his dramas.[2] The Greek critics took the right view of the nature of this portion of the *Phoenician Maidens:* "Euripides," says the scholiast, "is often like that;"[3] in other words we here have one of those ethical, psychological or philosophical commonplaces which Euripides from time to time inserts into his plays, without troubling himself to observe whether the dramatic interest does not suffer thereby. Is it necessary to introduce Alcibiades in order to explain this incident, which is short and is almost justified by Polyneices' situation?

[1] For these dates, see the Introduction, p. 11.

[2] There is, it is true, another hypothesis, advanced by Zirndorfer (*Chron. fab. Eurip.* p. 81 *et seq.*), according to which the verses about exile allude, not to Alcibiades' return to Athens, but to his return to the army of Samos and to the speech which he made there. Thucydides (viii, 81) does inform us that he spoke to the soldiers of his sufferings in exile. But that event took place in July, 411; no allusion to it in a tragedy would have been possible until the month of May in the following year, that is, until a long time afterward. Furthermore, the date 410 for the *Phoenician Women* is contradicted by the evidence of the scholiast of the *Frogs* (53), who places that tragedy among the plays "performed a short time before." These expressions could hardly apply to a drama which had been played in 410, nearly five years before the *Frogs*.

[3] Alluding to verse 388.

II

FOREIGN POLICY

THE CHILDREN OF HERACLES—THE SUPPLIANTS

The greater part of Euripides' extant plays are contemporary with the Peloponnesian War; there is therefore no occasion for surprise that the great events of that time find an echo in his dramas. A poet who exalts the higher intellectual life—what was then called "wisdom"—ought to be devoid of enthusiasm for war. Not that he desires to depreciate military courage or diminish the virile energy of the soldier's soul. On the contrary he extols "the noble wreaths which are the guerdons of the daring which faces danger, the danger that begets glorious courage, while Greece allows the prudence which merely seeks to prolong life to remain in obscurity." He has verses full of indignation at

> "The youth who hates to play the man in war;
> He 's hair and flesh: deeds have no part in him."[1]

Nor has he any idea of quenching patriotic feeling. To cite but one example, where is this feeling more ardently expressed than in a fragment of the *Erechtheus?*[2] But if Euripides is not indifferent to the struggles of the foreign policy of Athens and not without concern for the nation's honor, the means which serve to maintain and to defend that honor are none the less repugnant to him. In the *Phoenician Maidens* he treats the same subject that Aeschylus deals with in the *Seven against Thebes;* but we cannot say of his drama that it is "full of Ares." Euripides is impressed less by the glories of war than by its cruelties, which excite his pity. It is his voice we hear when Adrastus, in the *Suppliants*, standing by the bodies of the Argive leaders who had fallen before Thebes, utters the following words as a sort of funeral homily:

> "Hapless mortals!
> Why do ye get you spears and deal out death
> To fellow-men?—Stay, from such toils forbear,
> And peaceful mid the peaceful ward your towns.

[1] Fragm. 1052.

[2] Fragm. 360.

Short is life's span: behoves to pass through this
Softly as may be, not with travail worn."[1]

Adrastus says also that the cities might avoid the disasters which ruin them, by seeking to come to an agreement before fighting with one another; and that they ought to settle their quarrels not in blood but with words.[2] Here a view is expressed which has nothing heroic about it and which probably Adrastus never would have uttered; but it agrees well with what we know of the poet's sentiments, and we must ascribe the honor of it to him. Euripides, therefore, like Aristophanes, is a supporter of peace,—of that peace which in the first years of the war the chorus of his *Cresphontes* had earnestly prayed for, but he found too slow in coming.[3] But he loves peace, not from a selfish desire for repose, that he may tranquilly farm his land, may be free from care and may enjoy solitude in his cave at Salamis; but because war is by its nature horrible to him, because his generous heart is open to pity for all the sufferings of humanity.

Humanity is a word which we should not venture to use in speaking of Aeschylus, but which we may use of Euripides. The latter did not always adhere to the narrow and limited idea of fatherland that his contemporaries entertained. He seems at times to have risen to the lofty conception of a great fatherland, open and common to all men—the whole earth. Diogenes of Sinope subsequently said: "I am a citizen of the world." Euripides says:

"The whole earth is the brave man's fatherland."[4]

[1] *Suppl.* 949 *et seq.* It is noteworthy that Adrastus hardly speaks of the warlike virtues of the leaders and makes chiefly their civil merits prominent.

[2] *Suppl.* 748, 749. Compare 119: τοιαῦθ' ὁ τλήμων πόλεμος ἐξεργάζεται. Cf. *Helen*, 1151–1160.

[3] Fragm. 453. Aristophanes in his *Husbandmen* reproduced the first verse of this eulogy of peace. The *Husbandmen* was performed in 424. On the other hand, if we take into account the expression: "O Peace, how long thou tarriest!" the *Cresphontes* can hardly be earlier than the third or the fourth year of the war. This play therefore might be placed between 428 and 425.

[4] Fragm. incert. 1047 (Musonius in Stobaeus, *Flor.* 40, 9). This idea was to be fully developed by the Cynics (see the verses by Crates quoted by Diogenes Laertius, vi, 7, 4) and the Stoics. It is in a different sense that a character in the *Phaethon* (fragm. 777) says that "man finds a native country wherever the earth sustains him." Lysias (31, 6) has pointed out the egotism of this maxim.

The idea that wisdom knows no boundaries seems to belong to our times; but Euripides, in his day, had already formulated it, when he said that the wise man was a friend of his, though he lived at the end of the world.[1] Shall we infer from this that Euripides, who had ground for complaint against Athens, was not deeply attached to his country? That would be a bold inference which a great many other passages would disprove.[2] It is none the less true that we find in him, as in Socrates, traces of a kind of cosmopolitanism which was then quite new: only a great mind could have entertained such a visionary conception.

If perchance Euripides cherished the dream of a universal fatherland, he must, more than once, have been rudely brought back to reality by the turmoil of events. At the very time when he was writing some of his tragedies, war was at the gates of Athens. How could a poet who was so much occupied with the present have always confined himself to the contemplation of the past, and have kept his dramas upon a height to which the din and the disturbances of public life could not reach? His allusions to the foreign policy of Athens are by no means veiled: they appear clear and distinct in the *Andromache*, in the *Children of Heracles*, in the *Suppliants*.

Like the greater part of his fellow citizens, his heart is full of hatred toward Sparta, and he criticises her institutions[3] and condemns her customs.[4] When he depreciates the detested rival of Athens, and says,—

> "If spear-renown
> And battle-fame be ta'en from Sparta's sons,
> In all else are ye meanest of mankind"[5]—

[1] Fragm. 902. Should we follow Nauck in reading ἐσθλόν in this passage instead of σοφόν?

[2] Love of country is often and forcibly expressed in Euripides: *Phoen. Maidens*, 358–360; *Iphig. in Taur.* 452, 453, 647–649, 1137 *et seq.*; fragm. 347, 1046, etc. Schenkl (*Die polit. Anschauungen des Euripides*, pp. 21, 22) has collected all the passages about the duty of a citizen to his country.

[3] Especially the twofold royalty. Cf. *Androm.* 471–475.

[4] Cf. *Androm.* 595–601 for a criticism of the freedom of women's education. Euripides has not always expressed feelings hostile to Sparta. The chorus of the *Alcestis*, a drama performed in 438, includes in the same eulogy the Carnean festivals of Lacedaemon and the brilliant celebrations of Athens.

[5] *Androm.* 724–726.

he shares the passions of his audience. In the *Andromache* Menelaus is the type of the Spartan, and he is hateful. It is he who carries perfidy to the point of cynicism by declaring to Hector's widow that he laid a snare for her to tear her away from the sanctuary where she had taken refuge;[1] it is he who yields neither to Andromache's tears nor to the supplications of young Molossus; he who in his heartless cruelty, for a specious reason of state, seeks to kill a woman with her child.[2] His daughter Hermione, proud and imperious, fiercely jealous, who, from fear of punishment, abandons her husband to follow the man who will presently effect her husband's murder, rouses the same kind of aversion. Listen to this apostrophe to the Spartans:

> "O ye in all folk's eyes most loathed of men,
> Dwellers in Sparta, senates of treachery,
> Princes of lies, weavers of webs of guile,
> Thoughts crooked, wholesome never, devious all,—
> A crime is your supremacy in Greece!
> What vileness lives not with you?—Swarming murders?[3]
> Covetousness?—O ye convict of saying
> This with the tongue, while still your hearts mean that!
> Now ruin seize ye!"[4]

In this explosion of Andromache's anger against Spartan perfidiousness, we feel that all the rancors of Athens break loose and that the poet here makes himself their echo; rancors that were more legitimate than ever at the moment when the Lacedaemonians were impudently violating the agreements of the peace of Nicias.[5]

[1] *Andromache*, 435–437. [2] *Andromache*, 519 *et seq.*

[3] Probable allusion to the Ταινάριον ἄγος of which Thucydides speaks (i, 128). Some helots had taken refuge as suppliants in the sanctuary of Poseidon at Cape Taenarum; the Lacedaemonians treacherously induced them to come out, took them off and killed them. These massacres of helots are not rare occurrences in the history of Lacedaemon.

[4] *Androm.* 445–452. Verses 186 *et seq.* of the *Suppliants*, which have the same meaning, are considered interpolations by Dindorf.

[5] We incline to the opinion which fixes the date of the *Andromache* a little after the breaking of the peace of Nicias. The text of the scholiast (445), whose source is Philochorus, is formal. He says that the Spartans "had violated the peace." The scholium which speaks of the beginning of the Peloponnesian War is more recent. The arguments from the metre which are advanced against this date are not decisive.

The *Andromache* was played in a foreign theatre, perhaps at Argos, whose distrust and hatred it was important to keep alive against Sparta.[1] The same sentiments had already been expressed in a play performed in Athens itself, the *Children of Heracles*. A rapid analysis of this play is necessary in order that we may understand with what events it was contemporary and what is the meaning of the allusions it contains.

The children of Heracles, pursued by Eurystheus after the death of their father, obliged to flee from town to town, turned away everywhere on account of the fear which the tyrant of Mycenae inspires, have come to seek an asylum at Marathon, in Attica, where Demophon is the ruler. The hero's sons have grouped themselves about the altar of Zeus, under the protection of Iolaus, nephew and companion of their father; the young daughters have taken refuge in the temple itself, with Alcmena, their grandmother. The exiles' fright is not without reason. Soon a herald arrives, sent by Eurystheus: he announces to Iolaus that he must leave Attica and return to Argos with Heracles' family; upon his refusal to do so, he brutally tears him from the altar. When the aged man cries out, the country folk (who compose the chorus) rush in and intervene between him and his aggressor, and they remind the herald that he is in a free country, among men who respect the gods and the rights of suppliants. The quarrel in which they have engaged is to be decided by Demophon, king of the country, before whom a debate is begun in which both sides in turn plead their cause. The envoy of Eurystheus indulges in disdainful language, mingled with promises and threats. Iolaus, on the other hand, acts humbly, as is suitable to his position and to the interests which he defends; addressing the son of Theseus, he not only invokes the bonds of kinship and of friendship which formerly united Theseus and Heracles, but also appeals to the generosity of Athens. It is this feeling of the honor of Athens that inspires Demophon's decision and that dictates his reply. He will not deliver up the children of Heracles. He does not weaken before the renewed commands and the reiterated menaces of the herald, and when the latter announces to him that an Argive army is at the

[1] This is what verses 733 *et seq.* suggest. Menelaus says: "There lies not far from Sparta a town which once was friendly, but now does hostile acts."

frontier, ready to invade Attica, he proudly accepts the challenge: "Thine Argos does not frighten me," he says; . . . "this country over which I rule is no subject of Argos, but a free country."[1] This noble firmness naturally evokes the admiration of Iolaus, who, left alone on the stage with Heracles' sons, extols the generosity of the king and of his people. How sensitive were the hearts of the Athenians to these words! Among the spectators of the play there were many who in the preceding years had seen Attica invaded, their own fields pillaged, their olive trees felled. These above all must have shaken with indignation and anger when Iolaus said to the sons of Heracles:

> "Boys, we have put our friends unto the test:—
> If home-return shall ever dawn for you, . . .
> Saviours and friends account them evermore,
> And never against their land lift hostile spear,
> Remembering this, but hold them of all states
> Most dear."[2]

It was the descendants of these Heraclidae who were now devastating the soil of Attica; who, scorning the past, vowed the ruin of that Athens which had saved their fathers![3] These legendary reminiscences, when brought into relation with the realities of the present, must have kept the hatred of Sparta[4] at Athens more intense and alive than ever.

Sparta did not alone engage people's minds at that time, but also Argos. There must therefore have been a lively interest in the struggle in which Demophon, leader of the Athenian army, and Eurystheus, leader of the Argive army, were about to engage in the course of the action of the play. The outcome of that struggle was not doubtful; a dramatic poet who remembered Phrynichus could not dream of inflicting on his audience the humiliating spectacle of even a legendary defeat of Athens. But if the victory—which, moreover, was in harmony with tradition—was certain, it

[1] *Children of Heracles*, 284–287.

[2] *Children of Heracles*, 309 *et seq.*

[3] This is the sentiment that Isocrates expresses in his speech on *Antidosis*, 61, Bekker.

[4] About the same time, the painter Apollodorus, the *skiagraph*, had painted a picture on the subject of the *Children of Heracles*. Schol. Aristoph. Plut. 385.

could not be achieved without difficulties. These difficulties, created chiefly by the interpreters of oracles, by ancient prophecies which named as a condition of victory the sacrifice to Persephone of a virgin of noble race, are quickly settled by the voluntary sacrifice of the heroic Macaria, one of Heracles' daughters, and the action, delayed for a moment, proceeds again rapidly. A messenger appears who brings the news of the victory of Athens. Eurystheus is not only vanquished, but is made prisoner. He is led upon the stage and brought face to face with Alcmena. When she sees before her the relentless enemy of her son, she cannot contain her wrath: she takes a savage pleasure in reviling and insulting him in his misfortune; in her rage she would slay him. But she is reminded that the laws of Athens forbid this: the Athenians are a humane and generous people, who do not put to death enemies captured in battle. Unable to get the consent of her hosts, Alcmena orders her slaves to lead Eurystheus away and secretly put him to death. Thus the vengeance of Heracles' mother was satisfied and Athens left unsullied by a murder which she had not authorized.

Is it possible to determine the events to which the drama of the *Children of Heracles* makes allusion, and thereby to fix its approximate date? Upon this question the critics are divided into two camps: some think that the play is directed against the Argives, others are persuaded that the poet has the Lacedaemonians in view. The former are impressed chiefly by the passages in which Athens declares, either through the utterances of Demophon or those of the chorus, that she is as great as Argos and has no fear of her;[1] from this they conclude that the tragedy must have been performed in 418, the very year in which the Argives separated from Athens to take sides with Sparta. As the Argives, under the influence of the democratic party, made a new alliance with Athens in the following year,[2] the drama of the *Children of Heracles*, they say, cannot be placed at any other date.[3] But some equally trustworthy critics put the date much earlier, as early as a period

[1] *Children of Heracles*, 243 *et seq.*, 284, 353, 370, 759–761.

[2] Thucyd. v, 82, 5.

[3] Boeckh, *Graec. trag. princip.* p. 190. H. Weil, *De trag. gr. cum rebus publicis conjunctione*, p. 20.

which may extend from 430 to 427.[1] Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff especially gives various reasons for this opinion,[2] which we will not enumerate, but state only the principal one, which seems decisive.

At the close of the drama, Eurystheus desires to show his gratitude to Athens, which refused to consent to his death, and he reveals to those who are about him an oracle of Apollo; the benefit of this to the Athenians, he says, will some day be greater than one could believe:

> "Me shall ye bury where 'tis fate-ordained,
> Before the Virgin's shrine Pallenian;
> So I, thy friend and Athens' saviour aye,
> A sojourner shall lie beneath your soil,
> But to these[3] and their children sternest foe
> What time they march with war-hosts hitherward,
> Traitors to this your kindness."[4]

This prophecy is no exception to the general law of prophecies. Composed after the event, it refers to recent occurrences, still present to all minds, and in an unmistakable manner to an invasion of the Lacedaemonians. Between 431 and 425 the Lacedaemonians invaded Attica five times. Which invasion is meant? Eurystheus, according to the passage quoted, must have been buried in the territory of the deme of Pallene, which was a part of the Attic tetrapolis, and it is there, not far from his grave, that the Spartans, in their invasion, are to encounter his hostility. Now, we know by the testimony of Diodorus that in the year 430 the Spartans laid all Attica waste, with the exception of the tetrapolis. They spared this, says the historian, because in earlier days it had shown hospitality to their ancestors, who had started thence to conquer Eurystheus; it seemed just to them to return a kindness for that which their fathers had received.[5] Whether the Spartans, in stopping before the limits of the tetrapolis, obeyed, as Diodorus states, a feeling of gratitude, or, as Euripides seems to indicate, yielded to the superstitious terror which the tomb of Eurystheus inspired in them, it is none the less true that the

[1] Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* p. 439. Pflugk (preface to his edition of the *Children of Heracles*) places this play between 429 and 426. Zirndorfer (*Chronol. fab. Eurip.* pp. 30–35) makes 425 its date.

[2] *Analecta Euripidea*, pp. 151, 152.

[3] The children of Heracles.

[4] *Children of Heracles*, 1029–1036.

[5] Diodorus, xii, 45, 1.

agreement between the text of the historian and that of the poet is such as to determine without doubt that the prophecy refers to the invasion of the year 430. The *Children of Heracles* would therefore be somewhat later than that date. But it cannot be put later than 427, because in 427 the Lacedaemonians laid waste the whole of Attica, not allowing themselves to be stopped by any religious scruples.[1]

It may be objected that this explanation leaves everything out of consideration in the *Children of Heracles* that is unfavorable to the Argives. But the noble revolt of the chorus against the threats of the foreigner, the proud defiance hurled by Demophon at the envoy of Eurystheus—are they not naturally due simply to the very subject of the play? The choice of such a subject no doubt shows that at this moment Argos was not an ally of Athens; it does not necessarily prove that the two cities were enemies. Perhaps there existed between them at this time secret discontent or vague grievances—a haughty or provoking attitude on the part of Argos, which Athens was determined not to bear; but the main drift of the tragedy does not allow us to infer any open hostility. The chief purpose of this play is the glorification of Athens, the avenger of the feeble against the strong, the protector of the holy rights of hospitality. The Argive Eurystheus appears merely as the chance enemy of the Athenians: when he declares war upon them, it is not they whom he desires to attack, it is the children of Heracles, the ancestors of the Spartans. Note especially his conduct at the close of the play. Vanquished, but treated humanely by his victors, he becomes the friend of the Athenians before his death, and he promises to be their savior after his death. Was this not an ingenious way of pointing out that the Athenians thought that they had a right to the friendship of the Argives? And were not the latter thereby asked to remember their ancestor Eurystheus, to be friendly to Athens, as he had been, and to remain like him the irreconcilable enemy of Sparta?

Like the *Children of Heracles*, the *Suppliants* is a play written with a special purpose. At any rate the two dramas resemble one another so much that the poet seems to have cast them in the same mould. In both are seen oppressed fugitives, and these find

[1] Thucydides, ii, 57.

an asylum in the territory of Attica, whose king refuses to surrender them to those who claim them. In the *Children of Heracles* Athens is the protectress of the rights of hospitality; in the *Suppliants* Athens fights in defence of the rights of the dead. Both tragedies have the same sort of ending: an Athenian victory that assures the safety of those who have put themselves under Athens' protection. The suppliants, after whom the play is named, compose its chorus and are the mothers of the Argive leaders who have fallen before Thebes. Under the guidance of Adrastus, king of Argos, they come to claim the intervention of Athens to bury the bodies of their sons, which Creon refuses to surrender. Theseus comes at the clamor of their wailing, and at first remains unmoved by their supplications and by the entreaties of Adrastus; he yields only to the generous exhortations of his mother Aethra. She persuades him to go and consult the popular assembly, which will authorize him to intercede with the Thebans, and to secure, by force if necessary, respect for the rites of the dead. In the mean time there arrives from Thebes a herald who informs Theseus, on behalf of Creon, that he must expel Adrastus, and who defies him to come and take away the bodies of the Argive leaders from the banks of the Asopus. This insolence makes war inevitable, and the Athenian army, by order of Theseus, takes the field. A few moments later—for, according to a convention that takes no account of time or of distance, matters move very quickly—a messenger comes to announce the victory of Athens, and presently the seven dead Argives are brought in on their biers. There follows a scene of lamentation, in which, after the funeral oration in honor of the leaders has been spoken by Adrastus, the episode is introduced of the death of Evadne, who throws herself into the flames of the bier of her husband Capaneus.[1] Finally we see the sons of the Argive leaders arrive, holding in their arms the urns containing their fathers' ashes. They alternate with their mothers in heart-rending wailing, and swear some day to avenge the dead. It is with these threats and with this prospect of vengeance that the tragedy really ends. For, as has been justly remarked,[2] the intervention of

[1] We shall return elsewhere to this episode.

[2] M. Hinstin, note on the *Suppliants*, in volume ii of his translation of the dramas of Euripides.

the goddess Athena is less the dénouement of the action of the drama than a conclusion prompted by political considerations.

This ending recalls, beyond possible doubt, a contemporaneous event which can easily be determined. Toward the close of the play, Theseus claims from Adrastus no other return for the service rendered than a feeling of gratitude toward Athens; a feeling which he hopes will endure from generation to generation in the hearts of the Argives. Adrastus promises Theseus that the gratitude of Argos shall be everlasting. Then the poet determined to introduce Athena, who, by giving to Adrastus' promise the authority of her sanction, bestowed upon this pledge, made in the name of a whole people, a character of inviolable sanctity. She says to Theseus:

> "But, for thine and thy city's travail's sake,
> First take an oath. Let yon Adrastus swear—
> He answereth for them—despot of their folk,
> For all troth of the land of Danaus' sons:—
> Be this the oath,—that never Argive men
> Shall bear against this land array of war;
> If others come, their spear shall bar the way.
> If ye break oath, and come against our town,
> Call down on Argos miserable ruin."[1]

Shortly before the time when Adrastus was thus about to swear loyalty to Theseus on the stage, oaths that were not fictitious had been exchanged at another spot, and an effective alliance concluded between Argos and Athens. The conclusion of that alliance was the work of Alcibiades. The peace of Nicias had been signed hardly a year when it was violated by the Lacedaemonians, who refused to give up the towns in Chalcidice and were in treaty with Thebes. It was then that Alcibiades conceived the idea of striking a blow at Sparta's power by securing for Athens an ally in the Peloponnesus. On receipt of the news that Sparta was making an effort to draw Argos into its alliance, he informed the Argives that Athens was ready to come to an understanding with them. Upon this promise, deputies arrived from Argos, closely followed by envoys from Sparta, which was disquieted by the menace of this alliance. Alcibiades played an unworthy trick on the

[1] *Suppl.* 1187–1195.

Lacedaemonians, checkmated them in the popular assembly, and succeeded in effecting the conclusion of a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance between Athens and Argos, to which Mantinea and Elis subscribed.[1] The text of this treaty has been preserved by Thucydides.[2] An inscription discovered at Athens in 1876, in the course of excavations between the theatre of Dionysus and the Odeum of Herodes, proved to be a fragment of one of the official copies of this treaty, that which was set up on the Acropolis.[3] Now, on the inscription, as in Thucydides, the text of the treaty contains the essential provision, which is found also in the verses of Euripides, that the Argives shall never invade Attica, and that, if other people attack the Athenians, they shall repel them by force of arms. There is then no doubt that in the *Suppliants* Euripides desired to celebrate the quite recent alliance of Athens and Argos, that he even undertook to strengthen this alliance by tracing to a distant past the origin of the friendship of the two peoples, and by placing that friendship under the special guardianship of the great protecting goddess of Athens.

Argos thus became an ally of Athens, but Thebes remained her enemy, and the play of the *Suppliants* breathes the spirit of hatred of Thebes. The Greeks, we know, considered it a grave offence to leave soldiers who had fallen in battle unburied. Theseus in the play would end this offence by marching on Thebes, whose king refuses to surrender the bodies of the Argive leaders. This violation of the rights of the dead belonged to legendary history; it was also real and contemporary history. Four years previously, the Thebans were the victors at Delium and had committed the same sacrilege as their ancestors: they had at first made the same refusal as Creon when the Athenians claimed the bodies of their dead.[4] At the time of the performance of the *Suppliants*, moreover, they merited greater detestation than ever, for they had contracted with Sparta a menacing alliance. With the hatred of Thebes there is mingled in the play, by way of necessary contrast,

[1] Thucyd. v, 43–46. [2] Thucyd. v, 47.

[3] This inscription, first published by Kumanudes (Ἀθήναιον, vol. v, p. 333), has been studied particularly by Kirchhoff, *Hermes*, vol. xii, p. 368 *et seq.* (1877), *Suppl. Corp. Inscr. Att.* no. 46 b. It contains some useful corrections of the text furnished by the manuscripts of Thucydides.

[4] Thucyd. iv, 98, 7, 101.

love of Athens, of her institutions and of her policy. The grammarian who wrote the argument of the *Suppliants* says that its subject is a "Eulogy of Athens." He is right. The real hero of the tragedy is in fact that glorious city "which people charge with boldness, but which proudly looks down upon its detractors; which grows greater in passing through dangers, while the more humble cities remain in their obscurity."[1] In writing the *Suppliants* Euripides has not only composed a drama calculated often to stir the heart; he has at the same time composed—and this assured its success—a patriotic work which delightfully flattered the national pride.

Shall we make further search for allusions to contemporary events in our study of the *Suppliants?* Shall we give credence to an English critic[2] who claims to have discovered that Adrastus, in the funeral oration delivered in honor of the Argive leaders, really portrays several Athenian statesmen? Euripides surely had not this intention. The portraits are unrecognizable, so little resemblance have they to their assumed originals. Who would have surmised that Capaneus, the godless Capaneus, smitten by Zeus, represents the godly Nicias? It is true that the Capaneus of the *Suppliants* is somewhat disconcerting. This very rich man, whose wealth does not render him proud, who has the modesty and the frugality of a poor man, this hero, easy of access, amiable toward all, even toward his servants,[3] does not answer well to the idea we have had of Capaneus since the days of Aeschylus;[4] but he corresponds no better with the Nicias of Plutarch.[5] Is this then a portrait taken from life? Is it not rather an imaginary figure, an ideal model set for the rich men of his days by the poet? The Athenians, who would never have divined Nicias in Capaneus, would have been quite as much surprised to learn that Eteocles stood for

[1] *Suppl.* 321–325. Aethra, mother of Theseus, speaks these words.

[2] P. Giles, *Classical Review*, vol. iv, March, 1890, p. 96. [3] *Suppl.* 861–871.

[4] *Sept.* 423–434. It is noteworthy that in another passage of the *Suppliants* (494–499) Euripides, disagreeing with himself, represents Capaneus, after the manner of Aeschylus, as an overbearing person who defies the gods.

[5] See especially (*Life of Nicias*, xi, 2) a passage which is a downright contradiction of the Euripidean portrait of Capaneus. Two essential traits of Nicias' character, his superstitious piety and his timidity, are not even hinted at in the *Suppliants*.

Lamachus,[1] Hippomedon for Demosthenes, Tydeus for Laches, and that Atalanta's son, for the reason that he is beautiful, beloved by men, adored by women, is none other than Alcibiades.[2] These are but so many idle notions, and need not further engage our attention.

Euripides, who in the *Suppliants* celebrates the virtues of Athens and her recent successes, was subsequently compelled to deal tenderly with that patriotic pride which he was no longer able to extol. After the Sicilian disaster he composed a short epitaph in honor of the Athenian dead, which delicately veiled the final catastrophe and recalled the departed glory: "These men defeated the Syracusans in eight battles, when the gods did not take sides between the two adversaries."[3] He had previously shared both the enthusiasm which the enterprise at first called forth and the anxiety which it subsequently awakened. The chorus of the *Daughters of Troy* say that they have heard proclaimed "the rare excellence of the land of Aetna, consecrated to Hephaestus, of Sicily, mother of mountains, situated opposite the Phoenician shore."[4] Now this tragedy was played in 415, the very year of the departure of the marvellous and fatal expedition. Two years later the poet was concerned with what was to happen. In the epilogue of his *Electra* the Dioscuri, upon withdrawing, say that they are about to fly as far as the Sicilian sea, in order to save the vessels there.[5] The ships in question are evidently Athenian ships, and just before the performance of the *Electra* a fleet commanded by Demosthenes had been sent to the aid of the army of Nicias, which was already in straits. Euripides never lacked interest in the misfortunes of his native land. A long time before this, at the close of the *Hippolytus Crowned*, the chorus chanted the following verses as they left the theatre:

> "On the city hath lighted a stroke without warning,
> On all hearts desolation.

[1] Eteocles has nothing in common with Lamachus but his poverty.

[2] The beauty of Parthenopaeus is a feature of the legend concerning him. Is it not evident that this young man "who has known how to keep himself free from all transgression" (900), who, moreover, was only a stranger in Argos, a metic (892), bears no possible resemblance to Alcibiades?

[3] Plut. *Nicias*, 17, 5.

[4] *Daughters of Troy*, 220 *et seq.*

[5] *Electra*, 1347, 1348.

Rain down, O ye fast-falling tears of our mourning!
When the mighty are fallen, their burial-oblation
Is the wail of a nation!"[1]

In the tragedy these verses apply to Hippolytus' death. It was the poet's intention to recall to the spectators' minds a recent misfortune, the death of Pericles, who a few months earlier had been one of the last victims of the plague.

The facts that have been presented testify to what extent the dramas which we are studying bear the stamp of intimate interest in the affairs of public life. At the same time they show how little justified is the reproach that Aristophanes makes that Euripides does not foster noble sentiments in the souls of the young. We need only to have read the *Children of Heracles*, the *Suppliants*, the fragments of the *Erechtheus*,[2] to aver that Greek tragedy is still in the hands of Euripides what it was in the time of Aeschylus, a school of patriotism.

[1] *Hippolytus Crowned*, 1462 *et seq.* These verses no doubt were intentionally substituted for those which came at the end of the first *Hippolytus* and have been preserved. Cf. Boeckh, *Graec. trag. princ.* p. 180; H. Weil, note on these verses, in his edition of *Sept tragédies d'Euripide.*

[2] Lycurgus (*Against Leocrates*, 101) distinctly says that Euripides chose this story from a patriotic feeling, and that he intended to make of it a lesson for the use of young people.

PART II

DRAMATIC ART IN EURIPIDES

CHAPTER I

CHOICE OF SUBJECTS

I

EURIPIDES IN RELATION TO AESCHYLUS AND SOPHOCLES THE LOST TRAGEDIES THEIR SOURCES

WE have studied Euripides the philosopher; it remains to study Euripides the artist. It would not agree with the truth, nor with the opinion men generally entertain, to deny that he had his faults, that he did not realize our ideal conception of Greek tragedy. But the art of Euripides, though incomplete and imperfect, was nevertheless — as the long success of his plays attests — of the highest order in the eyes of the Greeks. It was also an innovating art and its free initiative and bold efforts deserve close attention, — an art that is worthy of analysis less because of its merits than on account of its originality.

In order to establish this originality, we must evidently have Aeschylus and Sophocles constantly present to our minds, as terms of comparison. But before we institute comparisons, let us correct a current and accepted error which might perhaps warp our judgments. We sometimes hear it said that Euripides was the last of the three great tragic poets, as though there had been a regular succession, a sort of transmission of the "sceptre of tragedy," from Aeschylus to Sophocles, and from Sophocles to Euripides. The inferences deduced from this opinion are the following: Euripides was born too late, and found, it is said, the great themes exhausted; he was therefore often reduced to the necessity of making search at distant sources for new, extraordinary and complicated subjects, and thus he impaired the beautiful simplicity of the older tragedy. As he had predecessors, he was obliged to proceed in a different way; and, as Sophocles had achieved perfection, he found himself doomed to a fatal inferiority. But these deductions are drawn from a false premise. The succession which is asserted among the three great tragic poets of Greece is, in fact, chrono-

logically inaccurate. What is true is that Euripides was the immediate successor of Aeschylus, who died in the same year in which Euripides offered his first plays in the tragic contests. What is not true is that Euripides was the successor of Sophocles, for these two poets are in reality contemporaries. No doubt Euripides, who died a little before Sophocles, was younger than he, but only by a dozen years. Was that particular period one of those decisive times in the history of a people in which ideas and morals change and the public spirit is rapidly transformed? No. The moral and intellectual crisis which Athens experienced in the fifth century did not come until much later, with the Peloponnesian War. Euripides' youth was disturbed by it no more than was that of Sophocles, and the two poets who differed so much from one another were brought up under about the same conditions.

Were the great tragic subjects exhausted when Euripides brought out his first plays in 455? Sophocles, to be sure, had preceded him on the stage,—in fact, by just thirteen years.[1] In that interval Sophocles may have composed four or five tetralogies, that is, twelve or fifteen tragedies. But this earlier beginning is a small matter when we consider that the two poets walked side by side in the same career for a long time, that they were rivals for nearly fifty years. A large number of Sophocles' dramas, therefore, are later than other plays of Euripides, and the latter was able to make the first use of certain subjects which his rival was obliged to take up after him. We have proof of this in the case of the subject of the *Philoctetes*, which was dealt with by Euripides in 431 and by Sophocles more than twenty years later, in 409. Euripides may have been hampered by Sophocles in his choice of subjects, but Sophocles, in turn, must have been equally hampered by Euripides. Moreover, if the number of tragic subjects had been limited, their exhaustion, of which people speak, but which is made rather improbable by the infinite wealth of mythological legends, should have occurred, it would seem, toward the end of Euripides' career; we could understand how at that time he might have been led to seek his subjects elsewhere than in the current traditions. But exactly the opposite happened. The dramas that he wrote in his last years are, for the greater part, based on stories

[1] Sophocles competed for the first time in 468.

which had been dealt with by others before him. *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and the *Bacchanals*, which were performed after his death, *Orestes*, the *Phoenician Maidens*, *Oenomaus*, which appeared a few years before it, are subjects that are not new to the stage. On the other hand nearly all the dramas on subjects that he was the only one to deal with belong, if not to his youth, of which we know but little, at least to his mature age. His innovations in the choice of tragic subjects, therefore, were not forced upon him by a sort of necessity; they were adopted by him voluntarily and with a fixed purpose.

In what do these innovations consist? In order to understand this, we must not only study the extant tragedies of Euripides, but also take into account those that have been lost. Our poet wrote a great number of dramas, — not less than ninety-two. Of these ninety-two plays, which include the satyr-dramas, sixty-seven tragedies whose authenticity was not called into question were preserved down to the Alexandrian period.[1] Thus we lack to-day fifty tragedies of Euripides which the ancients used to read. If we had them and knew their dates, it is likely that our estimate of Euripides' genius and of his style in the various stages of his career would have to be modified. Consequently we must neglect no part that remains of these tragedies; not a fragment of them should be overlooked. These fragments are in themselves by no means unimportant. While many of them are very short, there are some of considerable length which give us almost entire scenes, as those of the *Phaethon*, and that of the *Melanippe Bound* which is preserved in a papyrus discovered in Egypt about twenty-five years ago.[2] Thanks to Dio Chrysostom, we possess a prose paraphrase of the prologue and of the entire first scene of the *Philoctetes*. This prose does not adequately render the verse of Euripides, to restore which unsuccessful attempts have been made,[3] but it gives us its mean-

[1] On this point we adopt the conclusions of von Wilamowitz, who, in his critical study (*Anal. Eurip.* p. 144 *et seq.*) of the evidence on the number of Euripides' plays, seems to us to have clearly shown that the divergences in this evidence are only apparent.

[2] This papyrus fragment, which is now in the Egyptian Museum at Berlin, was first published by Blass in the *Rheinisches Museum*, in 1880, vol. xxxv, and then studied by H. Weil (*Rev. de philologie*, vol. iv, pp. 121–124). Cf. Nauck, fragm. 495.

[3] Cf. Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Fragm.* p. 616.

ing and its connection; especially does it inform us about the character which the poet attributed to Odysseus. There are very few of these lost dramas of which we have no knowledge at all:[1] generally we know something about them, though it be only the subject. To know the subject of a drama is of course not the same thing as to know its arrangement and composition; but it means that we are informed about the characters whom the poet must have put upon the stage, and the dramatic situations in which these characters found themselves placed. It is therefore of some importance in determining the degree of Euripides' originality to know what sort of subjects he chose when he selected others than those that had been dealt with previously.

Such an investigation must be pursued with the utmost caution. The study of the fragments of Euripides must not be carried to an extreme, to the point where it would amount to guesswork. In fact, these fragments, aside from the exceptions which we have just noted, generally consist of moral maxims which were placed on we know not whose lips, and it is well-nigh impossible to determine their connection with the plot of the drama. To reconstruct an edifice in part or in its entirety, by means of a few small broken stones which did not enter into its essential or characteristic parts, is an undertaking in which the most adroit are bound to fail. How few of the reconstructions formerly conceived by Hartung or even by Welcker seem satisfactory to-day! If the study of the fragments themselves fails to yield trustworthy information, as is generally the case,[2] we must resort to outside sources; but, alas, these sources are far from abundant. A word casually uttered, a shaft quickly hurled by Aristophanes, are precious discoveries, since Aristophanes was a contemporary; but does not his malevolence render his credibility doubtful? If we were always as well informed as we are about the *Erechtheus* by the orator Lycurgus, *Melanippe the Philosopher* by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the *Alcmaeon in Corinth* by Apollodorus, our knowledge of the lost tragedies of Euripides would be much more com-

[1] These are the following: *Epeius*, *Licymnius*, *Peleus*, *Temenus*, *Thyestes*.

[2] Among the successful reconstructions, we must mention that of the *Antiope* by H. Weil, who published this essay in the *Journal général de l'Instruction publique*, vol. xvi (1847), p. 850 *et seq.*

plete than it is. Can we trust what the less serious writers, especially the scholiasts, say? It is supposed that an analysis of a certain number of Euripides' plays which we no longer possess is found in the *Fables* of Hyginus, because these *Fables* often appear to be nothing but abridgments of tragedies. But Hyginus cites Euripides specifically only twice,[1] and we must not forget that, although our poet was the most popular of the tragic writers, it still does not follow that, because Hyginus appears to draw his fable from a tragedy, this tragedy is certainly to be attributed to Euripides. With these reservations, we shall attempt to make the best possible use of the lost tragedies of Euripides and of the information which antiquity has handed down to us about them.

Some of this information is supplied by vase-paintings. One of Euripides' tragedies of which only the title was known, the *Alcmena*, had great light unexpectedly thrown upon it, some years ago, by this means.[2] Vase-paintings have perhaps some other surprises of this nature in store for us when they become better known and have been more carefully studied. But while it is useful to collect their testimony, we must not put blind faith in it. The vases which reproduce, more or less accurately, scenes from Euripides do not belong to the time of the poet. The Attic drama exercised no direct influence on painting in the fifth century.[3] Among the great masters of the period, so dramatic a painter as Polygnotus, for example, borrows his subjects from the epics or from lyric poetry, not from tragedy. The artists of an inferior order, whose business was to decorate vases, followed his example. We should seek in vain among the black-figured vases, as among the red-figured vases of the severe style, for distinct reproductions of tragic scenes. Subsequently, on the contrary, especially in the third century, such reproductions abound on the vases

[1] *Fab.* 8, whose title is *Eadem Euripidis* (*Antiope*); *Fab.* 186, *Melanippen Desmontis*, an evident corruption of Δεσμῶτις. *Fable* 4 has for its title *Ino Euripidis*, but this title is under suspicion. See Bursian (*Jahrb. f. Philol.* vol. 93, p. 776), whose views Nauck shares (*Trag. Graec. Fragm.* p. 402).

[2] Thanks to R. Engelmann's interpretation (*Beiträge zu Euripides*, vol. i, Berlin, 1882), for one of the two vases which he studied had been published a long time before in the *Monum. inéd.* of the *Nouvelles Annales de l'inst. archéol.*, 1837, pl. 10. — The subject of the tragedy *Alcmena* will be dealt with later on.

[3] On this point, see particularly C. Robert, *Bild und Lied*, pp. 129–149 (*Das attische Drama und die Vasenmalerei im fünften Jahrhundert*).

of southern Italy.[1] This is due to the fact that at that time Attic tragedy, which had been introduced into Sicily in the days of Aeschylus, was more than ever in favor in Tarentum and the principal towns of Magna Graecia. These towns had theatres, to which troops of wandering actors came to give performances[2] even at other times than the Dionysiac festivals. In course of time Euripides became the favorite poet of the actors as well as of the public, and his tragedies were played in preference to all others. The vase-painters of southern Italy, anxious to vary the motifs of their decorations and to delight the eye by the portrayal of subjects which would be popular as well as interesting, were thus led to employ their talents in rendering some of the scenes from Euripides that had been most admired and that had made the deepest impression in the theatre. Do these painted scenes conform exactly to the actual performance in the theatre? We may have our doubts about this in some cases. A comparison of the extant tragedies of Euripides with the works which were inspired by them shows that the vase-painters preserved a degree of independence in rendering the story of some of the plays, that they treated them with greater or less fulness and detail according to the space at their disposal.[3] The main facts of the scenes which they had had before their eyes in the theatre must always have been respected by them, but their fancy had free play among the accessories. The paintings on vases, therefore, notwithstanding the very lively interest that attaches to them, must not be regarded as perfectly accurate illustrations of the dramas of Euripides.

Does not the incompleteness of these various means of information bar us from acquiring an accurate knowledge of the sources from which the poet drew his subjects? We discern that he borrowed from Stesichorus both the extraordinary conception of his Helen and certain ideas in some other dramas;[4] but facts of this kind are neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently well estab-

[1] On this subject, and upon the whole question, see the very comprehensive essay of J. Vogel, *Scenen euripideischer Tragödien in griechischen Vasengemälden*, Leipzig, 1886.

[2] Cf. Foucart, *De Collegiis scenicorum artificum apud Graecos*, p. 51 *et seq.* Lüders, *Die dionysische Künstler*, p. 104 *et seq.*

[3] Note of J. Vogel, *op. cit.* p. 3.

[4] For details see the dissertation of Max Mayer, *De Euripidis mythopoeia*, Berlin, 1883.

lished to warrant the conclusion that he voluntarily neglected the traditions of the epics to give ear only to the lyric poets. When he appears to forget Homer, is it not perhaps because he remembers the cyclic poets whose works are lost to us? An attempt to observe in him a marked predilection for this or that kind of subject is also futile. The extant plays must not mislead us as to the importance of the Trojan legends in his dramas.[1] Likewise, if, in order to be agreeable to the Athenian public, he sometimes put Attic myths on the boards, he did so no more willingly nor frequently than Sophocles.[2] In fact he sought his material everywhere, near and far, in Boeotia as well as in Argos,[3] in Thessaly as well as in Crete.[4] At the most we may attribute to him, toward the end of his career, the intentional inclusion in the same performance of three tragedies belonging to a single legendary cycle: such is the trilogy that consists of the *Alexander*, the *Palamedes* and the *Daughters of Troy*, performed in 415; such also is that of the *Oenomaus*, *Chrysippus* and the *Phoenician Maidens*, which may be placed between 411 and 409.[5] But his purpose in doing

[1] Besides the *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, *Helen*, the two *Iphigeneias* and the *Daughters of Troy*, Euripides wrote only three dramas relating to the Trojan War: *Alexander*, *Palamedes*, *Philoctetes*. Among the works of Sophocles, on the contrary, we find twenty-two plays of this kind.

[2] There are only nine dramas of Euripides on Attic subjects: *Aegeus*, *Alope*, *Erechtheus*, the *Children of Heracles*, the first and second *Hippolytus*, *Ion*, the *Suppliants*, *Theseus*. There were eight by Sophocles: *Aegeus*, *Erigone*, *Ion* (*Creusa*), *Oreithyia*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Phaedra*, *Procris*, *Triptolemus*.

[3] Here are the titles of the tragedies in which Euripides exploited Theban or Boeotian legends: *Alcmena*, *Antigone*, *Antiope*, *Bacchanals*, *Chrysippus*, *Heracles*, *Ino*, *Licymnius* (*?*), *Oedipus*, *Phoenician Maidens*, *Phrixus*. The plays drawn from Argive legends are: the two *Alcmaeons*, *Andromeda*, *Augè*, *Cretan Women*, *Danaè*, *Dictys*, *Electra*, *Orestes*, *Pleisthenes*, *Stheneboea*, *Telephus*. The legend of the *Temenidae* belongs to Epidaurus.

[4] The dramas which deal with Thessalian stories are quite numerous: *Aeolus*, *Alcestis*, the two *Melanippes*, *Peleus*, the *Peliades*, *Protesilaus*. Cretan mythology is represented by the *Cretans* and the *Polyidus*. For northern Greece the *Archelaus* (Macedonian) should be added. Furthermore, Euripides placed on the stage Corinthian subjects (*Medea*, *Bellerophon*), and an Aetolian subject (*Meleager*). The *Oenomaus* was borrowed from Elis.

[5] Von Wilamowitz (*Anal. Eurip.* p. 175) believes in the existence of an older trilogy composed of the *Aegeus*, *Theseus*, *Hippolytus Veiled*. Cf. C. Robert, *Hermes*, vol. xv, p. 483, and Max Mayer, *De Euripidis mythopoeia*, p. 59. This is only a conjecture, but it is rather plausible. The same applies to von Wilamowitz's hypothesis about the trilogy of the *Children of Heracles*, *Cresphontes* and *Temenus* (*Hermes*, vol. xi, p. 302).

this is not easy to discover. At any rate he was not treading in Aeschylus' footsteps when he grouped plays which had only vague relation to one another and were not united by the continuity of a common subject.

Does Euripides often disregard tradition in dealing with this great variety of stories of different origins? It appears to us that the critics have rather exaggerated a spirit of independence which is very real in him, but is not peculiar to him. The Greek poets never denied themselves the right to modify, at their convenience, the form of the myths; this form the oldest of them had created, but not fixed, and it had nothing sacred or inviolable about it. Euripides makes use of this freedom conceded to all, which is more necessary in tragedy than in any other form of composition. Does he abuse it? We are rarely able to judge of this. According to the local legend of Corinth, it was not Medea who had killed her children, but the Corinthians themselves.[1] We need not give credence to the compilers who relate that Euripides received money to turn against the enchantress the horror of the murder that had been committed,[2] but must we not at least conclude that he was the first to transform the legend, with the intention of making a powerful and effective drama out of it? We might think so, if we did not know that his play reproduced exactly the plot of a *Medea* earlier than his own, that of Neophron of Sicyon.[3] Phoenix, also, like Hippolytus, was in Euripides the purest and most virtuous of young men, whereas in the *Iliad* he shared the couch of his father's mistress;[4] but who would venture to maintain that the story of Phoenix had never been handled after the *Iliad* otherwise than it is treated by Homer?[5] And, finally, is it

[1] Pausan. ii, 3, 6. Apollod. i, 9, 28. Schol. *Medea*, 264, Schwartz.

[2] Ael. *Hist. Var.* v, 21. Schol. *Medea*, 9.

[3] See on this point the note which H. Weil has prefixed to the *Medea* in his edition of *Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*. Nauck (*Trag. Graec. Fragm.* p. 730) is not of this opinion. He has adopted von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff's hypothesis (*Hermes*, vol. xv, p. 487), according to which it is the Sicyonians who, with a view to diminish the fame of Athenian tragedy, claimed that Neophron's *Medea* antedated that of Euripides.

[4] Schol. *Iliad*, ix, 453.

[5] It has also been noticed (schol. *Hecuba*, 3) that Euripides makes the wife of Priam a daughter of Cisseus, while in the *Iliad* (xvi, 718) she is the daughter of Dymas. But this change of genealogy is so purposeless that the poet cannot have invented it; in this matter he must have followed some author other than Homer.

Euripides, or the author of the *Oedipodeia*, or the author of the *Thebaid*, who has Iocasta live at the time of the combat between Eteocles and Polyneices, and die by their side?[1] We do not know. On the other hand, it is known that our poet sometimes showed himself to be more faithful to the generally accepted tradition than his rivals: he differs from Sophocles in regarding Polyneices as the younger of Oedipus' two sons, and, conforming to the Attic legend, he places the founding of the Areopagus[2] in the time of Cecrops, while Aeschylus, perhaps arbitrarily, had connected it with the trial of Orestes.

In other cases his respect for tradition evidently yields to the demands or simply to the free range of his art, and he feels no scruples about contradicting himself on the subject of the same myths. He listens now to the voice of common opinion,[3] now to that of Stesichorus,[4] regarding the too notorious wife of Menelaus. His Oedipus either himself put out his eyes upon discovering the fatal secret,[5] or was blinded by Laius' comrades in arms in revenge for the death of their master.[6] Antigone, in the tragedy of that name, was married to Haemon, but at the close of the *Phoenician Maidens* she declares that she will never marry the son of Creon, and that if she is forced to do it, she will behave like a Danaid. Of what consequence are still other contradictions of detail, the carelessnesses or inadvertences[7] which the scholiasts emphasize with more rigor than intelligence,[8] and which do not trouble us at all? Is it not evident that it did not occur to Euripides that he

[1] Euripides may also be charged with other alterations of tradition. He attributes to his Archelaus the actions of Temenus (Agatharchides, in the *Bibliotheca* of Photius, p. 444 b, 29). He makes the goddess Hecate, whom he confounds with Core, a daughter of Demeter (*Ion*, 1048). According to him the Muses are the daughters of Harmonia and were born at Athens (*Medea*, 830–832).

[2] *Electra*, 1258–1260.

[3] *Andromache*, 229, 602–604. Cf. the character of Helen in the *Orestes*.

[4] In his *Helen*.

[5] *Phoenician Maidens*.

[6] *Oedipus*, fragm. 541, Nauck. Schol. Eurip. *Phoen. Maid.* 61.

[7] In the *Alcestis*, for example, in 898, Admetus wishes to throw himself into the open grave, while in 608 and 740 we hear of a funeral pyre; but this pyre was impossible because Admetus' wife was to be returned alive to her husband.

[8] The charges of ἀσυμφωνία when they are not misdirected (*Hecuba*, 1219; *Orestes*, 396; *Phoen. Maidens*, 805) are simply cavilling (*Medea*, 97; *Orestes*, 1075; *Daughters of Troy*, 1107, etc.).

was constrained by this or that form of the legends which he wished to use; that he made his choice among these various forms which are not all known to us, that perchance he mingled diverse elements, and that when he made a complete innovation—and this seems to have been the exception—such innovation was entirely excusable, since it no doubt aided the development of his drama?

II

IMMORALITY OF CERTAIN SUBJECTS ARISTOPHANES' CRITICISMS

The study of Euripides' choice of subjects suggests the question of the morality of his plays,—a question that we should consider even if it had not been raised while the poet was still alive, and that too by Aristophanes.

To speak first of that which is most repugnant to our moral sense, need we be surprised that Aristophanes never dreamt of reproaching Euripides for the subject of his *Chrysippus?* And yet the main incident of this drama was the rape of Pelops' young son by Laius, who was enamored of his beauty.[1] Cicero speaks of it only in veiled words: "Who does not understand, in reading Euripides, what Laius means to say and what are his desires?"[2] The Greeks undoubtedly expressed themselves more freely. As a love of this kind had found expression in the *Myrmidons* of Aeschylus, and in the *Women of Colchis* and *Niobe* of Sophocles,[3] we must believe that it shocked people no more on the stage than it did in real life. Euripides therefore displayed no signal hardihood in having his *Chrysippus* performed. But in the *Cretans* the love portrayed was monstrous,—Pasiphae's passion for the bull;[4] and we wonder how the poet dared and in what manner he was able to treat such a subject, which he was the first to take up. However, this drama appears to have been one of those that shocked nobody, no doubt because the legendary love of Minos' wife was en-

[1] Ael. *De Nat. Anim.* vi, 15; *Var. Hist.* ii, 21. Cf. Apollod. iii, 5, 5; schol. Eurip. *Phoenician Maidens*, 1760, etc.

[2] *Tuscul.* iv, 33, 71.

[3] Athen. xiii, pp. 602 e, 601 a. Plato, *Symp.* p. 180 a.

[4] Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 849. I. Malalas, p. 86, 10. Liban. *Declam.* vol. iii, pp. 64, 375. Cf. Apollod. iii, 1, 4.

tirely beyond the possibilities of nature. But Aristophanes, who forgets Pasiphae,[1] forgets neither Phaedra nor Stheneboea, whose passions are more usual; and he blames Euripides severely for presenting the spectacle of their waywardness.[2]

The tragedy that bore the name of *Stheneboea* is lost: only a small number of very short fragments of it remain, which would not enable us to form any idea of it if the story which is the basis of the play had not already been told in the *Iliad*,[3] and an obliging scholiast[4] had not taken the trouble to relate it to us.

The hero, Bellerophon, forced to go into exile from Corinth in consequence of an unintentional murder, took refuge with Proetus, king of Tiryns, in order to be purified by him of the blood he had shed. Endowed by the gods with grace and beauty in addition to courage, during his sojourn with Proetus he inspired his host's wife, Stheneboea, with a guilty love,[5] but remained indifferent to her allurements and repelled all her advances. Disdained, this woman wished revenge; she went to her husband and demanded the death of Bellerophon, who, as she said, had affronted her honor. From respect for the laws of hospitality, Proetus was not willing himself to shed the blood of the man whom he had received at his hearth; he bade Bellerophon bear to the king of Lycia, Stheneboea's father, a message, which was a sentence of death. In order to put this sentence into execution the latter conceived the plan of sending Bellerophon to fight the Chimaera, a monster that previously nobody had been able to withstand. But the hero came out of this trial victoriously, and, contrary to all expectation, returned to Tiryns, determined to have his revenge. In order that he might the better secure it, he employed a ruse. He persuaded Stheneboea that his feelings toward her had changed, and that he had decided to take her for his wife if she were willing to follow him.[6] She allowed herself to be car-

[1] It is not impossible that he makes an allusion to her, in verse 850 of the *Frogs*, in the words γάμους ἀνοσίους. But as the scholiasts remark, this expression can be applied to other women in Euripides' dramas.

[2] *Frogs*, 1043.

[3] *Iliad*, vi, 155 *et seq.*

[4] Scholium of Gregory of Corinth. See the passage in Nauck, *Trag. Graec. Fragm.* p. 567.

[5] In Homer she is called Anteia. Euripides, therefore, has borrowed his subject from another source than the *Iliad*.

[6] Schol. Aristoph. *Peace*, 141.

ried off. Both mounted Pegasus, the winged horse, but upon reaching the open sea, not far from the island of Melos, Bellerophon turned round and hurled his companion into the waves. He then returned to Proetus, in order to tell him what he had done and to justify his deed.[1]

It must be admitted that the catastrophe of this drama conveys a moral, since we see the guilty woman punished. What manner of evil could Aristophanes have found in the tragedy? What he objected to in it was the character Stheneboea. Aristophanes, whose audacity is infinite, who himself lays claim to every license because he writes comedies, allows none to Euripides, who writes tragedies. He does not wish wickedness to be displayed on the tragic stage; he requires that the heroes and heroines who wear the buskin shall not be the victims of disgraceful passion. If that was one of the laws of tragedy, it is certain that Euripides, in his *Stheneboea*, did not respect the law.

Phaedra is a second Stheneboea. The story of these two women, in its essential features, is the same. They are both married women, and both conceive an adulterous passion which is not requited, and take revenge for the disdain with which they are rejected by accusing the man who has scorned their love of attempting their seduction: in the end they die a miserable death.[2] —Does the Phaedra of the second *Hippolytus* deserve Aristophanes' censure? Boileau may have been thinking of her as well as of Racine's heroine when he spoke of the "virtuous woe" of Phaedra. She is indeed in no sense responsible for the passion which leads her astray. The love which she has felt spring up and grow in her heart without being able to check its progress, which has brought her only acute suffering without a moment of happiness, was sent upon her by a goddess. She is the victim whom Aphrodite sacrifices in the execution of her plan of vengeance upon Hippolytus.[3] Powerless to master this divine malady, she sees no

[1] On the drama *Stheneboea*, see Wecklein's monograph in the *Berichte der Münchener Akademie*, 1888, vol. i, p. 98.

[2] This is, as we know, a very old story, perhaps of Asiatic origin. In the Bible story the virtuous Joseph is a Bellerophon and an Hippolytus; Potiphar's wife is a Stheneboea and a Phaedra.

[3] See the prologue of the play, in which the goddess informs the audience of her intentions.

other means of escape from dishonor than death; and when the nurse has betrayed her secret, when she hears the angry voice of Hippolytus resound through the palace, she kills herself. It is true that in dying she infamously calumniates the son of Theseus; but must not the wrath of Aphrodite be satisfied? And these incriminating tablets—are they not an extreme measure to which she takes recourse that after her death she may save her reputation in the eyes of her husband and in the esteem of the world? This odious calumny, which is one of the essential features of the story treated by Euripides, thus again attests the regard Phaedra has for her honor. It is not to such a woman that the insult may be applied which Aristophanes makes her share with Stheneboea; the Phaedra of the extant tragedy is anything but a πόρνη. But it was doubtless not so much of her that Aristophanes was thinking as of the Phaedra of the first *Hippolytus*, who was not at all like her. The first Phaedra did not struggle against her passion; she abandoned herself to it. Love had no terrors for her; on the contrary, she declared that she took for her master "that irresistible god, so ingenious in attaining the impossible,"[1] and she sought to justify her guilty desires by the infidelities of Theseus.[2] Perhaps she employed no intermediary to acquaint Hippolytus with her passion, but herself declared her love to him, boldly and without circumlocution.[3] When she was scorned, she calumniated with her own lips, in the presence of Theseus, the man whom she had not been able to seduce, and she did not slay herself until after the catastrophe that befell Hippolytus, when there was no other escape for her.[4] This shameless Phaedra, who shocked the taste and the moral sense of the Greek critics,[5] was too odious a character to succeed on the stage. Need we be surprised that Aristophanes pitilessly pointed out this error of Euripides, refusing to remember that the poet had subsequently made amends for it, and that he intentionally confounded the two Phaedras in the same reproof?

[1] Nauck, fragm. 430.

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 28 a (*De aud. poet.* 8).

[3] This is what we may assume from a scene in Seneca's tragedy. Seneca probably took Euripides as his model. See H. Weil's note on the first *Hippolytus* in his *Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*. Cf. A. Kalkmann, *De Hippolytis Euripideis*, p. 24.

[4] H. Weil, *loc. cit.*

[5] The author of the argument of the second *Hippolytus* characterizes her part by the word ἀπρεπές.

There is another woman whom Aristophanes likens to Phaedra,[1] who at first seems to have but little resemblance to her,—Melanippe. Daughter of Aeolus, Melanippe was the heroine of two of Euripides' dramas: one called Μελανίππη δεσμῶτις (the fettered), the other Μελανίππη ἡ σοφή (the wise, the philosopher). Aristophanes appears to have specially in view the heroine of this latter drama.—Melanippe was a young girl of marvellous beauty. Poseidon, god of the sea, became enamored of her and succeeded in making himself beloved. As the result of her liaison with the god, Melanippe, during her father's absence, gave birth to twins. Dreading the anger of Aeolus upon his return, and following Poseidon's advice, she abandoned the children in the midst of a herd of cattle. The twins grew up suckled by a cow and under the paternal charge of the bull of the herd. Surprised at so marvellous an occurrence, the cowherds informed Melanippe's father of what appeared to them to be a prodigy. The king decided that these children were monsters (τέρατα) and that they must be burned alive, and he bade his daughter adorn the victims and herself lead them to the sacrifice. Melanippe, obliged either to witness the death of her children or to reveal the secret of their birth, was in a most cruel position. At first she attempted to save the twins without betraying herself. She sought to convince her father that in nature there were no prodigies, no facts contrary to the general laws of the world. She developed this idea in a long speech (ῥῆσις) which was a set exposition of philosophical doctrines and which gave the play the title that it has kept. But all this fine reasoning had only slight effect on the mind of Aeolus. Melanippe, notwithstanding her eloquent effort, in the end saw herself obliged to explain everything and to confess her shame, in order to save her children. On this revelation, Aeolus had his daughter's eyes put out and commanded that she be confined in a subterranean prison.[2]

It would seem that so cruel a punishment entirely satisfied all moral requirements. Why then was Aristophanes so severe against Melanippe? Because his demands were extraordinary and because

[1] *Thesmoph.* 546, 547.

[2] This is the dénouement indicated by Hyginus, *Fab.* 186. About the events which precede it, see Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Rhet.* ix, 11 (Walz, vol. v, pp. 355, 356); cf. viii, 10. See also Greg. Cor. (*Rhet. Graec.* vol. vii, p. 1313).

he elevated the moral ideal of tragedy very high. Melanippe was a girl who had allowed herself to be seduced, who had committed a sin; but in the play of Euripides, she at the same time expressed very noble sentiments and was animated by the most generous feelings. The position of this young mother who had resolved to sacrifice herself for her children excited pity and interest to the very highest degree. Aristophanes, it appears, evidently feared that this interest would be too keen, and that this splendid part given to a fallen girl would become a bad example in Athens. But why had he nothing to say about Aerope, who was much more guilty than Melanippe? The latter at least yielded to glittering allurements and felt the irresistible power of a god. Aerope had no such excuse: she gave herself to a slave. Caught by her father, she was to have been cast into the sea, where her disgrace would have been buried with her. But Nauplius, who was entrusted with the execution of this order, did not obey, but gave Aerope in wedlock to Pleisthenes.[1] Thus we have a dissolute girl who not only was not punished, but found a husband! What a surprise for the audience, and with how much justice could Aristophanes have raised the charge of immorality! But we must not draw from these facts hasty conclusions damaging to Euripides' drama. We do not know indeed how the poet treated this story, whether he did not remodel and transform it, and whether the ending of his *Cretan Women* really was such as, following the scholiast on Sophocles, we have just outlined it.

Still other criticisms are expressed in the *Frogs*. "Has not Euripides brought panders (προαγωγούς) on the stage," says Aeschylus, "and women who are confined in temples, and girls who have intercourse with their brothers?"[2] Let us examine each of these points in order.

In all the extant dramas of Euripides there is but one character to whom the term προαγωγός could be applied: this is Phaedra's nurse, who indeed plays a very ugly part. To her mistress, who has just allowed the avowal of her passion to escape her lips and who carries her hatred of herself to the point of desiring death, she boldly declares that she must live, and live in order to love.

[1] Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 849. Sophocles, *Ajax*, 1295–1297, and the scholiast. Cf. Apollod. iii, 2, 2.

[2] *Frogs*, 1079–1081.

She tries to dispel Phaedra's fears, to silence her remorse, by representing to her that there are gods in heaven who do not have the same scruples as she,—that Aphrodite's power is a formidable power, to which it is better to yield without resistance, and she intimates her intention of revealing the secret of her mistress' love to Hippolytus.[1] Notwithstanding Phaedra's fears and prohibitions, she executes her plan in a scene which the poet has very skilfully hidden from view; he shows us only its final result. It is not the nurse's fault if this result does not conform with what she has expected and if she does not succeed in bringing Hippolytus and Phaedra together in love. There is therefore no doubt that this woman must have aroused in the spectators somewhat of the repugnance which decent people felt for the professional προαγωγοί. That business had long before appeared to be so abominable that Solon's laws punished it by death; the reason given was that the panders "lend the aid of their shamelessness to people who, though they desire to do wrong, do not dare to do it, and that they receive money to effect disgraceful deeds which without them would not be done."[2] If, as Aristophanes demands, tragedy should be a school of virtue, it is certain that a character such as Phaedra's nurse would have deserved to be banished from it, and we shall readily concede that this rôle was justified only by the needs of the dramatic action.

The woman in Euripides' drama who was confined in a temple was Augè, daughter of Aleus: she gave birth to Telephus in the very sanctuary of Athena, whose priestess she was. The story added that Aleus, upon discovering his daughter's shame, had her placed together with her child in a chest which, like that of Danaè, was committed to the waves of the sea, and that, under a divine guidance, this novel craft landed at the mouth of the Caicus, where Teuthras, the king of Mysia, received the shipwrecked mother and child, took Augè for his wife and brought up Telephus as his son. Although a passage in Strabo[3] seems to indicate that this was the story that was developed in Euripides' tragedy, it is likely that

[1] *Hippol.* 437 *et seq.* [2] Aeschines, i, 184.

[3] Strabo, xiii, p. 615. He names Euripides; but his particular statement, that Augè landed in Mysia "by the forethought of Athena," does not agree with a fragment of the play (266, Nauck) which implies the wrath of the goddess against her priestess.

the poet followed another version,[1] as follows. During a night festival of Athena, Augè was seduced and ruined by Heracles, who left her a ring as souvenir of their transient love. Nine months later Augè gave birth to Telephus. Aleus discovered everything. In his rage he had the child exposed in a deserted place and ordered Augè to be thrown into the sea. But Telephus was miraculously nurtured by a hind and Heracles arrived in time to recognize his son[2] and to save its mother. Whatever the form of the myth may have been in Euripides' play (the fact cannot be determined with certainty), the story, when put upon the stage, must have given offence. Like Melanippe, Augè was a young girl who had intercourse, not with a god, it is true, but with a hero, and that was no less compromising. To make matters worse, she was a priestess, and a priestess sworn to chastity, because she served the worship of Athena, the virgin goddess. Finally she was delivered —an abominable profanation—in the very temple of her goddess. It is well known that, in the eyes of the Greeks, a sanctuary was as much defiled by the birth as by the death of a human being. Euripides did not hesitate to challenge this prejudice; he even tried to show its absurdity by the words of his heroine. Augè, addressing herself to Athena,[3] says: "Thou hast pleasure in seeing the spoils taken from the dead,[4] and that spectacle does not profane thine eyes; and does the fact that I have brought a child into the world appear to thee an offence?" But all the arguments of Euripides were unavailing; the majority of his contemporaries remained faithful to a view which they got from their fathers: Augè's delivery in the temple must have shocked them. Sophocles, who had dealt with a part of the same subject in his *Alea-*

[1] This version is found in a fragment of Moses Chorenensis (*Progym.* iii, 3) published by A. Mai in the Milan edition (p. 294) of the Chronicle of Eusebius. Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (*Anal. Eurip.* p. 189) first called attention to it.

[2] What seems to show that such was probably the dénouement of Euripides' play is the fact that this scene was frequently reproduced in Greek art (frieze of the Pergamum altar, Overbeck, *Plastik*, vol. ii[3], p. 254; painting from Herculaneum, Helbig, *Wandgem.* 1143). On a fragment also of a ceiling from Pozzuoli, now in Paris in the Musée Guimet, we see Heracles leaning on his club, watching a child, Telephus, that is suckled by a hind.

[3] Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii, 841. Fragm. 266, Nauck.

[4] She refers to the trophies taken from the enemy which were hung up in the temples.

dae,[1] had no doubt avoided this detail of the myth, for fear that it would be disagreeable to his audience.[2] Euripides, whose custom it was to attack all false ideas, was less timid.

His audacity was still greater in his *Aeolus*.[3] Macareus, the oldest son of Aeolus, so the story ran, conceived an unfortunate passion for one of his sisters, Canache. For a long time he managed to master his desires and to respect her whom he loved; but one night, overcome by wine, he violated her.[4] Aeolus, learning of this calamity, sent his daughter a sword. Canache understood this silent command and killed herself. Macareus, who had gone to his father, had fallen at his feet and had finally obtained his forgiveness for his sister as well as for himself, ran into the young girl's room and found her bathed in blood. At sight of this, he seized the sword that Canache had used upon herself and thrust it through his own heart.[5] The intense pathos of this drama must have affected the audience, but they could not forget its strangeness. The sight of such an incestuous love was an unprecedented occurrence on the Attic stage. Justly, therefore, could Aristophanes reproach Euripides for choosing a subject which obliged him to display the revolting spectacle of this extraordinary passion, examples of which were afforded by the debased manners of barbarians, but which in Greece was regarded as monstrous.

Aristophanes makes Euripides criminally responsible for the immorality of some of his heroines, and asserts that he never represented Penelope on the stage because Penelope was a virtuous woman.[6] At the time when he said this, people had not yet seen and admired the Evadne of the *Suppliants*, nor perhaps the Laodameia of the *Protesilaus*. But Aristophanes wilfully forgets a woman whose moral elevation is far greater than that of Odysseus' wife.

[1] Alcidamas, the rhetorician, *Odysseus*, p. 185. Cf. Vater, *Die Aleaden des Sophocles*.

[2] This conclusion may be drawn from the fact that Aristophanes attacks Euripides exclusively.

[3] Aristoph. *Clouds*, 1371, 1372, and schol. Dion. Halic. *Rhet.* ix, 11.

[4] Antiphanes, parodying no doubt a tragedy, in Athen. x, p. 444 c.

[5] This is the account of the historian Sostratus (Stob. *Floril.* 64, 35; cf. Plut. *Mor.* p. 312 c). It is very likely that this was also the plot of Euripides' drama, although Euripides is not mentioned by Sostratus. A vase-painting (*Arch. Zeitung*, 1883, pl. vii, 1; J. Vogel, *Scenen eurip. Tragödien*, pp. 28–33) appears to refer to the subject of this play.

[6] *Thesmoph.* 547, 548.

Penelope, who awaits her husband so long a time, whose faithful heart never forgets him, but steadily hopes for his return, has qualities which should not be depreciated; but the very laudable virtue that she displays is chiefly the virtue of patience, not the virtue of sacrifice. But Alcestis, who dies in order that her husband may live, makes a sacrifice that surpasses everything that we can imagine. Another female character whom Euripides might have cited against the criticism of his adversary is Helen, in the tragedy of that name.[1] He is so innocent of the charge that he never put a respectable woman on the stage as to have desired in this play to convert the adulterous wife of Menelaus, the notorious mistress of Paris, the woman who was the most justly despised in all Greece, into the purest of women and the most faithful of wives, and to have transformed her whom, in the *Cyclops*, he had called "everybody's wife" into a model of virtue, into a veritable Penelope. Aristophanes' censure may apply to Aerope, to Sthenebœa, to the Phaedra of the first *Hippolytus;* it does not touch the other women of Euripides' dramas.

A second charge frequently made against our poet in antiquity, in the name of religion rather than of morality, was that he chose subjects which led him to give important parts to godless characters. The godless characters in his dramas are Bellerophon and Ixion.

Bellerophon, in the tragedy that bore his name, was not the hero of the *Stheneboea*, and the situation in which he was placed was very different. In the exaltation of his pride he conceived the plan of rising on his winged steed to the very dwellings of Olympus, where he proposed to visit Zeus himself. He mounted Pegasus, who carried him toward the celestial heights. But the ruler of the gods, irritated by so much audacity, made Pegasus mad. The divine creature threw his rider, who fell upon the earth in Lycia. Bellerophon was not killed, but he rose bruised and lame, his clothes soiled and in tatters. It was in this state that he appeared upon the scene. Euripides had wished to make him an object of pity, and at the same time a striking example of humbled pride. Bellerophon, reduced to misery, forced to beg for

[1] This play had been represented just a year before the performance of the *Thesmophoriazusae*. Schol. *Thesm.* 1012 and 1060.

a livelihood, had no doubt been cruelly punished; but likewise he had openly professed his impiety and had indulged in dangerous language about the gods.

Euripides' champions could say that such language was in conformity with the speech of the traditional hero of the play. But this explanation evidently did not satisfy the masses. Verses such as some of those which have been preserved of the *Bellerophon*[1] must have sent a secret alarm through the ranks of the audience present at the performance, and must even have aroused in many a revulsion of religious feeling which the ending of the play did not suffice to assuage; the audience must have left the theatre with the impression—ill founded perhaps, but inevitable—that Euripides through the medium of Bellerophon had offended the gods.

The *Ixion* produced an analogous impression. We know from Plutarch that the poet was blamed for his "impious and wicked" Ixion.[2] As impiety was combined with immorality in this character, the dislike which he aroused must have been even greater than that of which Bellerophon was the object. The following is what was related about him in the story which Euripides followed: Ixion, one of the Lapithae of Thessaly, was betrothed to the daughter of Deïoneus, and invited his father-in-law to come and claim the presents which were his due, according to the usage of heroic times. This invitation was the cover for foul play. Hardly had Deïoneus set foot in the abode of his future son-in-law, when he fell into a ditch filled with fire which Ixion had had dug for him, and there he was consumed. This heinous crime incensed the gods, who hated the sight of Ixion. Only Zeus consented to purify the murderer; he carried his pity so far as to admit Ixion to his table and into the society of the Immortals. Ixion requited so many kindnesses ill. He abused Zeus' hospitality by trying to seduce the queen of the gods, who informed her spouse of this impudent attempt. Here there occurs a singular particular in the story: Zeus, in order to make quite sure of the intentions of the bold seducer, took a cloud from the sky and gave it the appearance and shape of Hera. Ixion fell into the trap that had been set for him: he approached the cloud and had intercourse with it. Zeus, thus in-

[1] Fragm. 286, Nauck.

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 19 e (*De aud. poet.* 4).

formed about Ixion, punished the wretch: he had him bound by Hermes to a winged wheel, which carried him through the air.[1] —It must be admitted that this was a peculiar subject for a tragedy. We should be tempted to feel surprise that it should have been chosen by Euripides, if we did not know that the same legend had already inspired two dramas of Aeschylus.[2] Moreover this story is known to us only through some verses of Pindar and the abstracts of it which the scholiasts give us, and we are absolutely ignorant how it may have been adapted to the tragic stage.[3] All that we can surmise is that Euripides, when he undertook a subject that had already been treated by Aeschylus, no doubt introduced some novelties, and that he must have treated it more boldly than his predecessor and with less consideration for the scruples of the audience. How did he manage to make interesting on the stage a character which is simply odious in the story? Great as his skill may have been, it is certain that he was not able to overcome entirely the repugnance of the public. He tried—as we are told—to allay this feeling by saying: "I did not allow Ixion to leave the stage until I had bound him to his wheel."[4] If these are really the words of Euripides, they are characteristic. To justify the temerity of Ixion by his suffering was nothing less than claiming for the tragic poet the right to show on the stage all kinds of depravity, on the sole condition that the spectators should be made to witness the final punishment of the culprits.

This was not the theory of Aristophanes and of those who shared his views. "The poet, the true poet," says Aeschylus in the *Frogs*,[5] "should conceal the evil, should not introduce it on the stage nor have it represented there. Children are instructed by the master, the youth by the poet, and we should say nothing that is wrong." Thus we see that the question of the morality of the stage, which to-day divides men's minds, had already divided opinion in Athens. But this question was more limited there than

[1] Pind. *Pyth.* ii, 21–48, Dissen. Diod. Sic. iv, 69, 3. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. iii, 62. Schol. *Iliad*, i, 268.

[2] The *Perrhaebides* and the *Ixion*, which perhaps belonged to the same trilogy.

[3] The amphora in the Museum of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg which represents the tortures of Ixion in Hades (Raoul Rochette, *Monum. inéd.* pl. 45, 1; *Arch. Zeitung*, 1844, pl. 13) gives no information whatsoever about Euripides' play. [4] Plut. *Mor.* p. 19 e (*De aud. poet.* 4). [5] *Frogs*, 1053 *et seq.*

it is with us. We need only have read a few scenes of Aristophanes in order to understand that it did not arise at all in Greece in regard to comedy. The discussion had reference solely to tragedy, which some desired to have conform to a certain ideal of loftiness, nobility, and the higher life, but which Euripides, on the contrary, did not hesitate to assimilate to everyday life, by representing man not only in his sufferings and weaknesses, but even in his baseness. To-day we readily concede that the heroes of tragedy cannot all be models of honor and of virtue; but we must recognize that in this instance Aristophanes' strictures hit the mark. "Is the story of Phaedra not true, did I invent it?" Euripides asks of Aeschylus.[1] The latter replies: "Certainly it is true;" and he implies, "But what is the use of displaying this ignominy?" What, indeed, is the use? Were the other stories of heroic mythology so devoid of episode and so lacking in dramatic characters that, in order to interest and to move, recourse was necessary to a Stheneboea or an Aerope, to a Macareus or an Ixion? Neither the need of new features, nor the desire to produce pathetic effects, nor the special ideal which Euripides had set himself for tragedy, nor the usual moral ending of his plays, was a reason sufficient to justify the choice of such characters or of such subjects. The youth, to whom all boldness is alluring, found pleasure in it; the "old men of Marathon," and all those who cared for the integrity of the nation's education, were not wrong in deploring it.

[1] *Frogs*, 1052 *et seq.*

CHAPTER II

DRAMATIC SITUATIONS

I

TERROR

ATTEMPT TO SECURE TRAGIC EFFECTS

ARISTOTLE has said of Euripides that he is "the most tragic of poets."[1] In the text of the *Poetics* this judgment is introduced by the particular remark that the tragedies of Euripides almost always end unhappily; nevertheless we may be allowed to give a broader application to the philosopher's observation, and also to assume it expresses the prevalent opinion of antiquity. What was Aristotle's meaning? According to him the spectacle of tragedy rouses two kinds of emotions in the human soul: emotions of terror and emotions of pity. Although these two impressions may at times be mingled, it is expedient to distinguish them. The moving power appropriate to tragedy, then, is a power that sometimes makes us tremble and shudder, and sometimes touches our hearts and affects us to tears. Euripides has the reputation of special excellence in the latter. But he was not only the dramatic poet of pity; he was also, as we shall see, the poet of terror.

From the beginning of his career Euripides seems to have sought for the effects which the spectacle of terrible situations, or the account, if not the view, of horrible deeds, produces on the stage. Among the plays that, at the age of about twenty-five, he first offered at the tragic contests, and which secured him a third prize,[2] was the tragedy *Peliades;* this is now lost, but its subject is partly known to us.—When Jason returned from Colchis with the golden fleece, his first thought was to take vengeance on his uncle Pelias, who had thought that he was sending him to his death when he obliged him to face the dangerous trials from which he had come out victorious. Jason informed Medea of his plan and she undertook to execute his revenge. She went to the daughters of Pelias and represented to them that their father was of an ad-

[1] *Poet.* xiii, p. 1453 a, 29, Vahlen.

[2] *Life*, p. 2, 15, Schwartz.

vanced age, that he had no male offspring, and that the throne was without an heir, and she offered to use her supernatural power and change the graybeard into a young man. At first this proposal encountered only a very natural incredulity. Thereupon Medea, in order to convince Pelias' daughters, performed before their eyes various miracles by means of her magic herbs: she threw an old ram into a kettle of boiling water and a few moments later a white lamb leaped out. The sight of this decided the young girls, —they killed their aged father, cut his body in pieces and boiled it. But the result agreed neither with their hopes nor with Medea's promises. When they realized that they had been duped, they fled from the country, maddened by grief and horror.[1]— Such a tragedy, in whatever way Euripides may have treated it, must have produced a great impression. The young girls evidently decided to lay hands on Pelias only after prolonged and painful hesitation and cruel suffering. The anxious execution of their unwitting crime, the agony of their waiting, the horror which seized them when they saw that they were the murderers of their father, roused strong emotion. Had Sophocles already sought to produce it? There is nothing to prove this.[2] But the choice of the story

[1] For a part of this account we have the authority of Moses Chorenensis (*Progymn.* iii, Mai, Euseb. *Chron.* p. 43), who had read the Euripidean play. How the drama ended is not clear. According to Hyginus (*Fab.* 24), when the daughters of Pelias had fled, Jason left the throne to their brother Acastus and himself departed with Medea for Corinth. But does Hyginus follow Euripides? There is reason to doubt this since, according to the foregoing version, Pelias had no male child and since in *Fable* 25 the facts, as recorded by the mythographer, do not agree with the poet's *Medea*. Ovid, in the seventh book of his *Metamorphoses* (297 *et seq.*), probably borrowed somewhat from Euripides. We should like to believe that his scene of the murder of Pelias recalls the account given of it in the tragedy. But how can this be established?

The reconstructions of the play attempted by Welcker (*Griech. Trag.* vol. ii, p. 625 *et seq.*) and Hartung (*Eurip. restit.* vol. i, p. 61) are conjectural.

As to the monuments, the vase-paintings (Minervini, *Bullet. arch. napol.* vi, 7, p. 53) reproduce chiefly the scene of the rejuvenation of the ram. On a vase at Ruvo (Millingen, *Peint.* pl. vii), Vogel believes he sees represented the coming of Jason and Medea into the presence of king Pelias. The painting from Pompeii studied by C. Robert in the *Arch. Zeitung* (1875, vol. xxxii, p. 134, pl. xiii) is more interesting in so far as it shows us various scenes in the history of the Peliades; it does not, however, give any precise information about Euripides' drama.

[2] Nauck (*Trag. Graec. Fragm.* p. 248) believes and Bergk (*Griech. Lit.* vol. iii, p. 493) declares that the subject of the Peliades was the same as that of the Ῥιζοτόμοι of Sophocles. This is by no means certain. The verses of the Sopho-

of the *Peliades* indicates that Euripides from the very beginning of his career treated themes in which tragic terror was carried to its extreme limit.

He was to return to subjects of the same kind subsequently, in his *Heracles* especially, more than thirty years afterwards.[1] The daughters of Pelias killed their father in the hope of rejuvenating him, and they knew that they were killing him; Heracles butchered his own children in an access of insane rage. Heracles' insanity bears no resemblance to that of Ajax, which is vented only on animals and rouses only pity—the former horrifies us. But it does not break forth in the play like a thunderbolt. The poet has thought it necessary to prepare the spectators and, by announcing what is to happen, to mitigate in advance the horror which they are to feel. Following the example of Aeschylus,[2] he has personified raging insanity as a goddess, Lyssa (Fury), who appears under the form of a spectre which we see above the palace. Like Hephaestus in the *Prometheus*, Lyssa feels some repugnance in serving as the instrument of vengeance upon an innocent person; but she finally obeys the commands of the queen of the gods, of which Iris, who accompanies her, is charged to remind her. At last she declares that she will enter into the house of Heracles and that soon the hero will no longer be master of himself: "His children," she says, "shall be my first victims; he shall slay them, and

clean play quoted by Macrobius (*Sat.* v, 19, 9) show us Medea as a magician who devotes herself to the practice of her art, and nothing more. Why should this scene take place in Thessaly rather than in Colchis? In Apollonius also, we see Medea cutting up poisonous herbs and invoking Hecate. Moreover, what authority has Bergk for the statement that the drama Ῥιζοτόμοι antedates the *Peliades* of Euripides and that it belongs to the first part of Sophocles' career, "when the poet still adhered to the grand style of Aeschylus, so appropriate to such a subject"? How are we to judge of the style of the Ῥιζοτόμοι by the twelve extant lyric verses, which, moreover, have nothing Aeschylean about them. As, furthermore, it is not established that the subject of this tragedy is the same as that of the *Peliades*, we cannot maintain that Euripides had been preceded by Sophocles in treating this theme.

[1] It is impossible to make a more exact determination. The metrical and historical reasons that decided Zirndorfer (*Chronol. fab. Euripid.* p. 56 *et seq.*) to place the *Heracles* in the year 421 are not conclusive. Th. Fix (*Chron. fab.* xi, in the Preface to the edition of Euripides in the collection of Didot) for analogous reasons places it towards 419; von Wilamowitz, more reasonably, places it in a period which may extend from 425 to 413 (*Eurip. Herakles*, vol. i, p. 349).

[2] In his Ξαντρίαι. Suidas, *s. v.* ὀκτώπουν. Photius, *Lex.* p. 326, 22.

he shall not know[1] that he is slaying them." In accordance with the usage of the Greek theatre, the awful scene of which Lyssa is, at Hera's instigation, the real author, does not pass before the public. But the audience divines and hears what it does not see —the song of the frightened chorus brings everything before it. At the same time there comes from within a great and confused noise which makes it shudder. It hears the hurried steps of Heracles, who rushes headlong upon his children; his bellowing, like that of a bull, mingled with their cries; the din of the walls which he batters with his club and of the roof of the house which falls crashing under his blows. When the messenger enters, we already know everything. But the account of the messenger — who brings the successive events of this scene before our eyes, who makes us follow step by step the progress of the hero's fury, who forgets nothing, who enters into all the details, the most touching as well as the most horrible — has the effect of defining the vague impression of terror which has seized us and, in defining it, of increasing its intensity. At first he portrays to us the physical effects of insanity: the hero's rolling eyes, with blood-shot balls starting from their sockets, and the slaver running down from his lips over his beard; then, the wandering of his mind, his imaginary voyage far from Thebes, across the isthmus of Corinth, as far as Mycenae, where he soon thinks he has arrived and where he makes terrible threats against Eurystheus; the intervention of his father, who tries to calm him by taking his hand, but to no purpose —he no longer knows him; the sight of his sons which doubles his fury, for he thinks that he has before his eyes the sons of Eurystheus and he would take vengeance on them for their father's persecutions.[2] Here the scene becomes so striking that we must quote the passage itself:

> "They,[3] quaking with affright,
> Rushed hither, thither: his hapless mother's skirts
> This sought, that to a pillar's shadow fled.
> A third cowered 'neath the altar like a bird.
> Then shrieked the mother, 'Father, what dost thou?
> Wouldst slay thy sons?' The thralls, the ancient, cried.

[1] *Heracles*, 865. The verse which follows is justly condemned by von Wilamowitz as an interpolation. [2] *Heracles*, 922–970. [3] Heracles' sons.

He, winding round the pillar as wound his son
In fearful circlings, met him face to face
And shot him to the heart. Back as he fell,
His death-gasps dashed the column with red spray.
Then shouted Heracles, and vaunted thus:
'One of Eurystheus' fledglings here is slain,
Dead at my feet, hath paid for his sire's hate!'
Against the next then aimed his bow, who crouched
At the altar's base, in hope to be unseen.
But, ere he shot, the poor child clasped his knees,
And stretching to his beard and neck a hand,
'Ah, dearest father,' cried he, 'slay not me!
I am thy boy—thine!—'Tis not Eurystheus' son!'
He, rolling savage gorgon-glaring eyes,
Since the boy stood too near for that fell bow,
Swung back overhead his club, like forging-sledge,
Down dashed it on his own son's golden head,
And shattered all the bones. This second slain,
He speeds to add to victims twain a third.
But first the wretched mother snatched the child,
And bare within, and barred the chamber-door.
But he, as though at siege of Cyclop walls,
Mines, heaves up doors and hurls the door-posts down,
And with one arrow laid low wife and child."[1]

We could hardly find a more terrible scene in all Greek tragedy, rich as it is in catastrophes of all kinds. There are, however, two scenes in Euripides' own works which approach it: the one in which Agavè, a prey to bacchic ecstasy, tears to pieces the body of her son Pentheus, whose bloody head she brings back to Thebes; and the other in which Medea kills her children. But the latter lasts only a moment, and is not the subject of a detailed narrative; only the cries of the young victims, vainly struggling against the knife, are heard, and from a distance. Medea's deed, furthermore, cannot have produced the same impression as that of Heracles. The hero's children and their mother fall beneath the blows of a maniac, who, his madness passed, will be tortured by shame and despair when he awakes and sees his work. Medea slays her children under the domination, it is true, of a violent passion, but in full possession of her wits; she slays them after reflec-

[1] *Heracles*, 971–1000.

tion and with deliberate purpose, although not without a pang. In their murder she pursues a definite plan, that of "rending the heart" of Jason;[1] and it is this plan which rules her whole conduct. If resentment at the outrage and the fury of jealousy had driven her to kill Jason, after destroying in most awful suffering the woman whom he had preferred to her, there would be nothing inconsistent with the ordinary course of passion. But Medea's passion exceeds the common measure; she does not kill Jason, she uses a sort of refinement of cruelty in letting him live, because she means to make him suffer through all that is dear to him, by slaying his new wife and murdering his children. After this she herself does not think of dying, as we should hope she might. She means to live, that she may see the effect of her vengeance. Her shelter is assured—she has taken care of that in advance: Aegeus has come just in time to promise her an asylum in Athens, and the Sun, her grandsire, very conveniently loans her a winged chariot, which enables her to escape all pursuit, in violation of public feeling. Indeed it seems as if the spectators at this moment must have felt a sort of disappointment, that their moral sense must have revolted at the sight of this woman who, after placing the interests of her revenge above the maternal instinct, and though guilty of the greatest atrocities, continues to live, and to live unpunished. One thing only could mitigate this impression: the character which tradition gave to Medea. She is not a common woman; she is not a Greek: she is one of those barbarians whose crimes are as unbounded as their passions. Before slaying her children, she has killed her brother Apsyrtus and has cut his body in pieces; at her instigation the Peliades have boiled the limbs of the aged Pelias in a kettle. She comes from Colchis. The wondrous character of her distant home, her skill as a magician, her powers as an enchantress, place her almost beyond the pale of human nature.

This instance of a mother who kills her children, with full knowledge of what she is doing, but does not die with them, is unique in Greek tragedy. But Euripides has more than once sought for the dramatic effects necessarily produced by the sight of a mother or of a father whom a fatal combination of events

[1] *Medea*, 817.

makes the unwitting slayers of their children. This is what happened in the lost tragedy *Ino*. The subject of this play would be very well known, if we could believe that the mythographer Hyginus[1] had really analyzed Euripides' play.

Athamas, king of Thessaly, had a wife Ino, who presented him with two sons. One day Ino disappeared. Athamas thought she was dead and made no delay in marrying a second wife, Themisto by name, who in turn became the mother of twins. But finally he discovered that his first wife was alive, and that she lived on Mt. Parnassus, where she served the worship of Bacchus. He sent for her and had her secretly brought back into his palace, where, without making herself known, she mingled with the crowd of slaves. Themisto was informed of the discovery that Athamas had made; but she did not know the whereabouts of Ino, whom she had never seen. Possessed by jealousy, she desired to take revenge on the woman who was likely to rob her of Athamas' love and to drive her from the palace: she conceived the idea of killing Ino's two children. In order to carry out her plan she took as her confidante and accomplice a slave woman, who turned out to be no other than Ino herself. The latter succeeded so well in disguising her feelings as not to give her rival any suspicion. Themisto, in order to be sure that her blows should not miscarry during the night, instructed the slave to cover her own children with white garments, and Ino's with black. Ino did the opposite, and Themisto, misled by appearances, killed her own children. When she learnt what she had done, she killed herself.

In another tragedy, *Pleisthenes*, of which only a small number of fragments are extant, not a mother, but a father struck with fatal blow the son whom he did not know. The story was connected with the history of the fated family of the Pelopidae. Thyestes was driven from Argos by his brother Atreus, whose wife he had seduced. During his exile he stole away a young son of Atreus, whom he brought up as his own child and persuaded to believe that he was his father. When the child had grown up, Thyestes put upon him the task of vengeance. Pleisthenes went to Mycenae to slay Atreus, but he missed his stroke; the son did not kill his

[1] *Fab.* 4. We have said that the title of this fable, *Ino Euripidis*, is suspected by several critics.

father, but the father his son, in whom he thought he recognized the child of his brother.[1]

These examples suffice to show the kind of catastrophe by which Euripides sometimes endeavored to produce tragic emotion. But he was not the only poet who sought such effects. In Aeschylus, Orestes of his own free will kills Clytemnestra, and Pentheus is torn in pieces by his mother Agavè.[2] In Sophocles, Oedipus unwittingly slays his father Laius. To quote less well known examples, Odysseus, in the *Euryalus* of Sophocles, at Penelope's instigation smote fatally a son whom he had had by another wife long before and whom he did not know;[3] and Perseus, in the *Larisaei*, accidentally killed with a blow of the discus his grandfather Acrisius.[4] Euripides then did not draw upon a source of dramatic emotion unknown before his time; but it may be that he drew more largely upon it than the other tragic poets. Between them and him there is this further diversity, that his dramas move us in a different way. Mingled with the shock which scenes such as those we have just quoted must necessarily produce, the audience at a Euripidean play felt a profound pity for the victims, because these victims were children. From this it resulted that the catastrophes represented on the stage by the poet were not only terrifying, but painful and cruel, and that they rent the heart while they awakened horror. In this measure Euripides may have shown original treatment of a class of subjects that was not new.

There are other dramas of Euripides whose subject is similar to those just considered, but which produce quite a different final impression. Aristotle selects, among the most tragic situations, those "where a brother is on the point of killing his brother, a mother her son, a son his mother," but where the irreparable deed which was about to be done is not done because the actors in the scene suddenly discover their error. The examples of this which he gives

[1] Hyginus, *Fab.* 86. It is very probable that such was the subject of Euripides' tragedy. Fragment 625 (Nauck), "I did not kill thy father, though he was my enemy," ought to be from the lips of Atreus speaking to the young man, surprised in the midst of his attempt.

[2] The subject of Aeschylus' *Pentheus* was the same as that of Euripides' *Bacchanals* (argument of the *Bacch.*).

[3] Parthenius (*Amat.* 3), who seems to give an abstract of Sophocles' play, quoting his name.

[4] Apollod. ii, 4, 4. Schol. Apoll. Rhod. iv, 1091.

are all borrowed from Euripides.[1] We must therefore study these situations in our poet's plays and inquire whether the dramas of Aeschylus or Sophocles served as a model for them.

An example that Aristotle does not cite, but which should not be overlooked, is the *Ion*, in which a mother tries to poison her son, and a son would kill his mother. The subject of the *Ion* is not simple. A vulgar adventure which does no honor to a god is its starting point. The maid Creusa, daughter of Erechtheus, king of Athens, is gathering flowers in a field, when suddenly Apollo, "in the glory of his fair locks," appears before her, seizes her, and, notwithstanding her cries, drags her into the recesses of a cave, where he violates her. From this union a child is born which Creusa, in dread of the wrath of her parents, exposes on the slope of the Acropolis, in the very grotto which has for her such cruel memories. But Apollo is a good father—he watches over the son who has been abandoned by his mother. At his command Hermes carries off the new-born child, wrapped in its swaddling-clothes, and leaves it at the threshold of the temple at Delphi, whence the Pythia takes it up and rears it. The child grows up in the sanctuary and becomes one of the servitors of his father, the god. Meanwhile Creusa has succeeded in hiding her misfortune, and has married: she is wedded to Xuthus, a foreigner, an Achaean, who has been of service to Athens in a war against Euboea. This union has lasted several years, but has remained barren, and husband and wife are disconsolate at having no heir. Their desire for offspring determines them to go together to Delphi and consult the oracle. Thus Creusa is to find herself face to face with the child by Apollo that she believes to be long since dead. Presently, in front of the temple, the son addresses his mother, and there ensues between them a cleverly devised conversation, in which the explanations exchanged by the two speakers seem likely each moment to put them on the track of a secret which is vaguely felt, but is not revealed. The recognition indeed must not be brought about too quickly; in order that the play may deserve its name of tragedy, it is necessary that the recognition be retarded by painful occurrences and disturbing incidents.

It is Apollo who brings on these difficulties, just as it is he that

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xiv, 9 and 18, p. 1453 b, 20, and p. 1454 a.

is to solve them, without showing himself. Creusa's husband has gone alone to consult the god, and has received the following reply from him: "The first person whom thou shalt meet upon leaving this place will be thy son." Now, it is young Ion who first meets the eyes of Xuthus, who exclaims, upon seeing him: "Hail to thee, my son!" Ion is just as much astonished as is Xuthus himself, who cannot make anything out of the oracle. He searches his memory and thinks that he recalls a certain escapade of his youth, a night festival which might well have been the occasion of his unconscious paternity; but he is not sure of anything. The god has spoken; why not believe the god? Ion and Xuthus resign themselves. Upon reflection they finally even express their pleasure, but their contentment does not exceed the bounds of a modest satisfaction. There is one person who is not at all satisfied by this incident, and that is Creusa. When she learns that her husband has a son in existence, she cannot master her grief and anger, and longs for revenge. Her vengeance is to light upon young Ion; she will try to put him out of the way. Xuthus has arranged to celebrate the happy chance that has given him a son, and during the banquet an old man in Creusa's service shall mix a powerful poison in the young man's cup. But the attempt fails and its author is discovered. Creusa is then condemned by the magistrates of Delphi to be hurled from the top of a rock. The unhappy woman comes upon the stage and hurriedly takes refuge at the altar of the god. Behind her Ion rushes in, mad with rage, and determined to tear from the sanctuary the woman who has tried to kill him. Thus a son is on the point of slaying his mother, a mother has tried to poison her son, and both attempts result from failure to understand the meaning of the oracle of the god Loxias. But the matter will be arranged. The Pythia, who arrives at just the right moment to prevent Ion from striking Creusa, has preserved the wicker cradle which contains the swaddling-clothes of the infant rescued by her. These swaddling-clothes bring about the recognition, which is effected slowly and by degrees, with all the skill we should expect a poet like Euripides to display, and presently Ion falls into the arms of the mother whom he was about to slay.

Did the spectator feel tragic anxiety for the fate of the mother and for that of the son, before this happy ending was reached? Did

he tremble first for Ion and then for Creusa? Apparently not. In reading this play we cannot escape the impression that Euripides did not take the story seriously which underlies it, that he treated it with a smile, that he played with his subject. The spectators cannot have been more stirred while listening to the play than the poet had been in writing it. What they doubtless most admired in it was the plot,—the ingenious manner in which a god, of loose morals, managed to attain his object and to foist an embarrassing fatherhood upon a mortal. The *Ion*, in its material as well as in its tone, is one of those plays which belong both to tragedy and to comedy, and in which the tragic element is not very impressive. Perhaps it is for this reason that Aristotle makes no mention of it.

Another play, cited by him,[1] the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, left a stronger and more serious impression. The improbable parts of this dramatic story did not shock the Greeks, whose imagination, nurtured from infancy on the wonders of mythology, in no wise rebelled against the improbable so long as the poet knew how to make a good case of it. The scene of action was moreover a distant country, situated north of the Euxine Sea, almost at the end of the world so far as it was known in that direction. Into this wild country, where there was nothing astonishing in extraordinary occurrences, Iphigeneia, saved from the sacrifice, has been brought by Artemis, whose priestess she has become. The worship of the Taurian Artemis is a cult that is barbarous, as are the country and its inhabitants—it demands human lives. All strangers who land on that shore or whom storms cast upon it are offered as victims to the bloodthirsty goddess. Iphigeneia, who presides with repugnance over these immolations, has not forgotten her home and her kin, and she often thinks of her brother Orestes. A dream that she has had the night before makes her fear that he is dead, and she comes upon the scene to offer funeral libations to her brother. Presently two strangers are brought in who have just been caught and whom king Thoas, according to the custom of the country, destines for slaughter before the altar of the goddess. These strangers are Orestes and Pylades. Is it chance that brings them here? No, chance would not be a sufficient explanation. Euripides, who is never the slave of tradition, conceives the idea,

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xiv, 18.

possibly quite foreign to all tradition, that Orestes has been incessantly pursued by the Furies of his mother, and that, according to information Apollo has given, he will not be cured unless he carries off the miraculous statue of the Taurian Artemis and transports it to Attica. He has come for this purpose. The means that the poet has invented to bring Orestes and Iphigeneia face to face with one another are of little consequence, because henceforward the whole interest of the drama lies in that meeting and in the results which may spring from it. Orestes is a Greek, a stranger; the law is explicit—he must perish. On the other hand, the office which Iphigeneia holds obliges her to preside over this sacrifice as over the others. Here we have a sister who is about to kill her brother.

The poet prolongs this scene with skill, but not excessively. Orestes knows the fate which awaits him, and knows that he cannot escape it. He resigns himself to it with noble simplicity, carrying his pride so far as to wish to die unknown,—so far as to refuse to tell his name to this young Greek woman, who seems to know Argos, who asks him for news of Agamemnon, of Clytemnestra, of Orestes himself. Sympathy for the person of Orestes passes in turn through two opposite emotional phases. For a moment we are hopeful for him, when Iphigeneia offers to spare his life if he will carry a message to Argos. The next moment, anxiety reawakens, because Orestes is not willing to save his life at the cost of that of Pylades, and because Iphigeneia yields to his arguments. "Is this thy will? Well, he shall be commissioned to carry my letter, and thou shalt die, since thou seemest to have so great a longing for death.—Who will slay me? Who will perform this cruel duty?—I."[1] When she returns to the stage with the letter she has gone to fetch, she commands the guards who were watching the prisoners to make preparations for the sacrifice. The catastrophe, at this point, seems imminent. We know how it is avoided; we know that beautiful scene of recognition, so much admired among the ancients since the time of Aristotle. But in the scenes which precede, the anxiety, mingled with pity, which is inspired by the fate of Orestes and the fatal position of Iphigeneia has not roused terror. The emotion experienced is not at all violent. It is true

[1] *Iph. in Taur.* 614–618.

that Orestes is threatened with death by sacrifice, but the sacrifice has not yet begun; we do not see even the preparatory steps, which are taken behind the scenes, and thus we cherish a vague hope that the brother will not die by his sister's hand. Euripides might have carried the emotional element much farther, as did one of his successors when he undertook the same subject. Polyidus brought Orestes and his sister directly before the sacrificial altar, and it was under the menace of the knife that the recognition was suddenly brought about by the exclamation: "So I am about to be sacrificed in the same way as was long ago my sister Iphigeneia."[1] A scene managed in this manner would have been more thrilling, but Euripides did not wish to rouse that emotion here.

The hit which the poet avoided in the *Iphigeneia in Taurica* he had previously[2] made in his *Cresphontes*. The subject of this tragedy is that which Voltaire, after Maffei, developed under the title of *Merope*.—The king of Messenia[3] had been killed by a usurper, Polyphontes, who had laid hands not only on the throne but also on Merope, the wife of his victim. He had brought about the death of two of the sons of the king and of Merope. A third child, which in Euripides bore the name Cresphontes, had escaped death. His mother had secretly sent him to Aetolia, where he had been received and brought up by a friend of the family. Meanwhile Polyphontes had promised gold to anybody that brought the child back, dead or alive. Cresphontes, when he reached the age of manhood, planned to avenge the death of his father and brothers. He proceeded to Messenia, went to the king, told him that he had killed the son of the former sovereign, and demanded the reward for his deed. Polyphontes gave him a magnificent reception and lodged him in his palace. The young man, overcome by the hardships of his long journey, fell asleep. He had not yet made himself known to his mother. Merope, who saw in him the slayer of her son, entered the chamber in which he was lying, with an axe in her hand, and was on the point of striking him, when

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xvii (p. 1455 b, 10–12, Vahlen).

[2] As we have said, the date of the *Cresphontes* may be placed between 428 and 425.

[3] This king is called Cresphontes in the story. But in Euripides, Cresphontes is the name of the son, who could not have had the same name as his father.

her arm was stayed by an aged man who recognized the youth.[1]— This scene produced a great effect in the theatre. At sight of Merope poising her axe over the head of Cresphontes, and saying: "Let justice be done! Receive this blow from my hand," the spectators were in anguish; they trembled lest the old man should not arrive in time to save the son from his mother's blow.[2]

The spectacle of the *Aegeus* probably did not rouse such violent emotions. But there was a similar situation in this tragedy: a father was on the point of killing his son, not knowing who he was. This was Aegeus, king of Athens, who had married Medea, after she had been expelled from Corinth for the murders she had committed. Before this, in the land of Troezen, Aegeus had had intercourse with Aethra, daughter of Pittheus, whom he left when she was with child. On departing, he placed his sandals and his sword under a huge rock. Should Aethra give birth to a son, the child, when grown, was to lift the rock, take possession of the things placed there by his father, and meet him in Athens. Aethra's son was the hero Theseus; he surely would have no trouble in carrying out the instructions communicated to him by his mother. He arrived at Athens, at the palace of Aegeus, but did not make himself known. Medea, who had had children by the king, mistrusted this youth whose identity she perhaps guessed. She persuaded her husband into the belief that the new-comer was a conspirator who in a short time would kill him in order to usurp his throne, and that his plans must be forestalled. She had prepared a poison which Aegeus himself was to put into the youth's cup at a banquet. The crime was about to be committed when Theseus, before putting the fatal draught to his lips, made himself known to his father.[3]

[1] Hyginus (*Fab.* 137 and 184) does not perhaps give an accurate résumé of Euripides. But this was certainly the chief scene of the play (Arist. *Poet.* xiv, p. 1454 a, 5; schol. Arist. *Eth. Nicom.* iii, 2).

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 998 e (*De esu carnium*, ii, 5). O. Jahn thought that he found the subject of the *Cresphontes* in several vase-paintings (*Arch. Zeit.* 1855, pl. 66). This is far from certain.

[3] The story is told by Plutarch (*Thes.* xii) and by the scholiast on the *Iliad* (xi, 741), without mention of Euripides. But the scholiast of the *Medea* (167) informs us that allusion was made in the *Aegeus* to Apsyrtus: thus Medea had a part in the play. Fragment 4, "It is natural that the second wife should detest the children of the first," also seems to agree with the story as here narrated.

(*ii*) ALCMENA ON THE FUNERAL PYRE

In the *Alcmena* it was not a father who was about to kill his son, but a husband who, as the result of a fatal mistake, was on the point of slaying his wife. The subject of the *Alcmena* was totally unknown to us not many years ago. Conjectural criticism had succeeded merely in identifying this play with either the *Rhadamanthus* or the *Licymnius*,[1] that is, with dramas of which nothing is known. Now, thanks to the investigations of R. Engelmann,[2] this story may be read very clearly in the vase-painting[3] which is here reproduced. In the centre of the composition, which is signed with the artist's name (he was called Python), a woman, who is recognizable as a queen by her costume, and whom the inscription designates as Alcmena, is seated on a funeral pyre. At the right and left are seen two men engaged in setting fire to the pyre by means of burning torches. The name of one is Antenor; the other is Alcmena's husband, Amphitryon. But lightning strikes at their feet, and Zeus appears in the skies, sceptre in hand. While Alcmena, overcome by fright, raises her right arm heavenward, toward the ruler of the gods, two young goddesses, the Hyades, pour water upon the pyre from their amphorae, and a rainbow is seen shining through a storm of mingled hail and rain. This tempest, to which Plautus alludes in his *Rudens*,[4] puts it beyond doubt that the artist intended to depict a scene from Euripides' *Alcmena;* and the painting is most instructive (pl.ii). We learn from it that Euripides treated the legend of Alcmena after his own fashion. According to him, Amphitryon was not the resigned husband whom tradition represents; he was a furious husband, who thought that his wife was guilty, and who, in order to punish her for her unwitting infidelity, condemned her (after such powerful scenes as we can imagine) to be burned alive. Just as he began to put his terrible intention into execution, Zeus inter-

[1] Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* vol. ii, p. 690. Hartung, *Eurip. rest.* vol. i, p. 534.

[2] *Beiträge zu Euripides*, i, *Alcmene* (Berlin, Weidmann, 1882). Cf. Th. Reinach, *Revue critique*, 1882, 2, p. 261.

[3] This vase, which is in the British Museum, was published in the *Nouv. Ann. Inst. Arch.* 1837, pl. x. Engelmann has reproduced it on page 5 of his dissertation. The same subject is again found on a vase of the Castellani collection, in the British Museum (*Annal. Inst. Arch.* 1872, tav. d'Agg. A), but there it is dealt with very summarily.

[4] *Rudens*, 86 : "Non ventus fuit, verum Alcumena Euripidi."

vened and saved Alcmena by revealing to Amphitryon what had occurred and perhaps by informing him of the honor that was to be brought upon his house through the approaching birth of Heracles. But that happy ending had been preceded by a scene in which tragic terror had been carried to its extreme limit.[1]

Thus there are five tragedies in which Euripides employed the same means to call forth the same kind of emotion. This emotion is felt, not only because the persons whose lives are menaced are innocent, but because those who are on the point of slaying them will, unless prevented, slay those who are dearest to them on earth: a mother, a brother, a son, a wife. Thus it is their ignorance that produces a situation that affects the spectator. But, through a change of fortune, sometimes sudden, sometimes slow, but almost always brought about by a recognition, the spectator will presently experience a very different emotion. When the danger which he dreaded shall have been removed, he will give himself up to a sense of satisfaction as complete as the anxiety which went before was intense.

Did Euripides find the model for these situations in the poets who were his predecessors or contemporaries? None of the extant tragedies of Aeschylus or of Sophocles afford anything similar; but may not the fragments of their lost plays put us on the track of the similarity which we are seeking? Our information about Aeschylus is very meagre; often we know only the titles of his lost tragedies, but sometimes the title enables us to guess at the story which the poet treated. Now, with the possible exception of the *Mysians*, whose subject is imperfectly known,[2] none of the stories

[1] We believe, with Engelmann, that the scene of the funeral pyre must have been represented before the very eyes of the spectators (cf. the funeral pyre of Capaneus, upon which Evadne throws herself in the *Suppliants*). Zeus, who was the *deus ex machina* of the play, could not have appeared above the stage to solve a situation the events of which had taken place behind the scenes. Moreover, vase-paintings whose subjects are borrowed from tragedy do not ordinarily reproduce the accounts of messengers: they generally portray what was actually seen in the theatre.

[2] All that we know of it is that Telephus played a part in it, that he arrived in Mysia from Tegea, and that upon his arrival he did not open his mouth, as he was guilty of a murder (Arist. *Poet.* xxiv, p. 1460 a, 32; cf. Amphis, *Frag. Com. Graec.* vol. iii, p. 313). It is not certain that this tragedy dealt with the subject indicated by Hyginus, *Fab.* 100: Augè on the point of unwittingly killing her son Telephus, whom they are trying to foist upon her as a husband, and Telephus turning his sword against his mother. — Sophocles also wrote a drama, the *Mysians*, which is even less known.

has any resemblance to those of which we have just spoken. It is therefore probable that Aeschylus never, or very rarely, dealt with this kind of subject. But Sophocles, like Euripides, wrote a tragedy *Aegeus;* like him he wrote a drama called *Ion* or *Creusa.* It is true that the *Aegeus* of Sophocles may not have resembled that of Euripides in any way,[1] and we know nothing of the plot of the *Creusa*, certainly not that in it the mother wished to kill her son, or the son his mother. But fragments of other plays of Sophocles acquaint us with more definite facts. In his *Chryses*, the plot of which is a sequel to that of *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, a brother was on the point of unwittingly consigning a brother and sister to death. These were Orestes and Iphigeneia, who, after their escape, took refuge in Lemnus, under the protection of Chryseis, the priestess mentioned in the first book of the *Iliad.* Thoas, the king of Taurica, followed them to their retreat and claimed his prisoners, who had been condemned to death for the theft of the statue of Artemis. Young Chryses, the son of Chryseis, was about to deliver them to him, when the priestess revealed to her son that he himself, like Orestes and Iphigeneia, was a child of Agamemnon. When the recognition had taken place, Chryses aided his newly discovered brother and sister in slaying Thoas and forwarded their return to Greece.[2] The situation was not less dramatic in another of Sophocles' plays, the *Aletes*, named after a son of Aegeus. During the reign of Aletes in Argos, the false news was brought to Electra that her brother Orestes had been offered as a sacrifice to the Taurian Artemis. Electra proceeded to consult the oracle at Delphi regarding his death; there she met Iphigeneia, who had just arrived with her brother, but was not known to Electra. The same bearer of evil tidings who had informed her that Orestes was dead pointed out Iphigeneia to Electra as the slayer of her brother. Electra, overcome by rage at sight of her, took a burning fagot from the altar and was about

[1] Fragments 19 and 21 (Nauck) appear, however, to refer to the voyage which Theseus makes from Troezen to Athens.

[2] Hyginus, *Fab.* 121. The situation affords a certain analogy to that of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, but we do not know the date of the *Chryses* nor whether it preceded or followed Euripides' play. The fact that the story of this drama continues that of the *Iphigeneia* is no evidence so far as chronology is concerned.

to burn out her sister's eyes, when Orestes intervened and made himself known.[1]

Did Euripides take Sophocles as his model in the choice of these situations, or did Sophocles follow Euripides? Do the *Chryses* and the *Aletes* antedate or do they follow the *Cresphontes*, the *Ion*, and the *Iphigeneia in Taurica?* As the *Cresphontes* must be placed between 428 and 425, it is not impossible that Sophocles, whose career extends more than twenty years beyond this date, may have imitated dramatic combinations which had brought success to his rival.[2] But as the dates of the *Chryses* and *Aletes* are unknown, it is impossible to reach a trustworthy conclusion. Euripides may not have been the first to confront brothers and sisters, mothers and sons, who were about to slay one another unwittingly; but probably he excelled his rivals in dealing with subjects of this kind. So much we may safely deduce from the testimony of Aristotle, who selects examples of this sort of situation, not from the dramas of Sophocles, but from those of Euripides.[3]

His plays supplied the Greek critics, who, like Aristotle, sought to formulate the laws of tragic art, with examples of most varied situations. Sometimes the poet, while continuing to portray the instinctive love which binds parents to their offspring, sought effects in acts of atrocity which themselves violated that law of nature. He showed a father inflicting upon his daughter or son, for real or imaginary delinquencies, a punishment which, while cruel in itself, roused even greater horror because it was imposed by his hand. The daughter of Aeolus, Melanippe, because she had had the misfortune to be seduced, was condemned by her father to have her eyes put out and was then cast into a subterranean prison.[4] This barbarous exercise of paternal authority was revolting; the catastrophe of the play was so terrible that it obscured its moral significance. The story of Melanippe was repeated, with some variations, in that of Alope: she too had been abused by Poseidon and had been condemned by the cruelty of her father to a prison where

[1] Hyginus, *Fab.* 122. Cf. Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* vol. i, p. 215.

[2] H. Weil (in his note on the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, page 440 of *Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*) seems to incline to this view.

[3] Aristotle (*Poet.* xiv, p. 1454 a, 5–8) cites, besides a tragedy *Helle*, whose author is unknown, the *Cresphontes* and the *Iphigeneia in Taurica.*

[4] See above, p. 158.

she was to die.[1] In another drama, the *Phoenix*, the punishment which a father inflicted upon his son had a still more tragical effect, because the father was mistaken when he punished his son and recognized his error when it was too late. Amyntor, the father of Phoenix, kept a concubine by the name of Phthia. Like Stheneboea in the *Bellerophon*, like the Phaedra of the first *Hippolytus*, this woman was smitten with love for the young man and tried unavailingly to seduce him. Determined to revenge herself for his scorn, she slandered him, and accused him in the presence of his father of attempting to violate her person. In vain did Amyntor's legitimate wife, Phoenix's mother, whose rôle was a noble and touching one, try to intervene.[2] Amyntor, beside himself, threw himself upon his son with a torch in his hand, and burnt out his eyes. But the truth was soon discovered. The concubine inflicted punishment upon herself by leaping into a well. In despair Amyntor hanged himself.[3]

Aristotle correctly remarks that Euripides' dramas rarely end happily.[4] We might add that, at the close of several of his plays, there is an excess of misfortunes and a superabundance of catastrophes. Unhappy endings are of course of the very essence of tragedy, and the legendary families in which murder and suicide followed one upon the other were those whose adventures were most frequently put upon the stage. The catastrophe of a Greek tragedy

[1] The subject of the tragedy *Alope* must, as a whole, if not in its details, be the story told by Hyginus, *Fab.* 187. Cf. Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* vol. ii, pp. 711–717. Choerilus, a predecessor of Aeschylus, had written a drama *Alope;* but the facts in it were different. In that drama Cercyon was the son of Poseidon (Pausanias, i, 14, 3), whereas in the version of the story with which Euripides probably dealt, it is Poseidon who violates Alope, the daughter of Cercyon. —The adventures of Alope appear to be represented on a sarcophagus of the Villa Pamfili, studied long ago by Welcker (*Nouv. Annal. Inst. Arch.*, Paris, 1836, vol. i, pp. 149–160, pl. C; *Alte Denkm.* vol. ii, p. 203). Cf. Stephani, *Comptes rendus*, 1864, p. 147; Matz and von Duhn, *Ant. Bildwerke in Rom.* vol. ii, no. 2888. But this representation is far from clear.

[2] *Anthol. Pal.* iii, 3.

[3] Aristophanes' verse (*Acharn.* 421) about the "blind Phoenix" alludes to the principal event in Euripides' play. The rest of the story can be easily reconstructed, thanks to Apollodorus (iii, 13, 8), and to the information given us by Suidas (*s. v.* Ἀναγυράσιος) which he borrows from a certain Hieronymus, author of a work on the "Tragic Poets." Ion of Chius, a contemporary of Euripides, had produced a drama entitled *Phoenix* or *Coeneus.*

[4] Arist. *Poet.* xiii, p. 1453 a, 25.

is not always simple; it may be complicated. But Euripides sometimes made his endings unnecessarily sombre, either by adding new elements to the tradition or by combining several stories in one drama. Medea, before slaying her children, has got rid of her rival, the daughter of the king of Corinth. Her death does not suffice the poet, who determines that the poisonous fabric shall have still another victim. This unexpected victim is the young woman's aged father, Creon, who throws himself upon the half-dead body of his daughter, with heart-rending cries:

> "And straightway wailed and clasped the body round,
> And kissed it, crying, 'O my hapless child,
> What God thus horribly hath thee destroyed?
> Who maketh this old sepulchre bereft
> Of thee? Ah me, would I might die with thee!'
> But when from wailing and from moans he ceased,
> Fain would he have upraised his aged frame,
> Yet clave, as ivy clings to laurel boughs,
> To those fine robes: then was a ghastly wrestling:
> For, while he laboured to upraise his knee,
> She strained against him: if by force he haled,
> Then from the bones he tare his aged flesh.
> At last refrained he, and gave up the ghost,
> Ill-starred, who could no more withstand his bane.
> There lie the corpses, child by aged sire
> Clasped."[1]

The awful death of Creon was not essential to Medea's vengeance. She had not desired it. Do not the horrible details of this unnecessary death show the poet's intention of heightening the tragical impression of the first catastrophe by means of the second?

The catastrophe of Aeschylus' drama of the *Seven against Thebes* is the death of Eteocles and of Polyneices, slain by one another's hands. When Euripides took up the same subject in the *Phoenician Maidens* there must be other deaths in addition to those of the two brothers. In his version Iocasta thrusts a sword into her body and expires by the side of her sons. Iocasta's death and the death of Eteocles and Polyneices have in the course of the play been preceded by the death of Menoeceus, Creon's son, who in obedience to the oracle of Tiresias has sacrificed himself for the safety

[1] *Medea*, 1206–1221.

of Thebes. Thus we have no fewer than four corpses in the *Phoenician Maidens*. There were as many in the *Melanippe Bound:* Theano's two sons fell beneath the blows of Boeotus and Aeolus; their mother killed herself in despair; Melanippe's father was slain by the sons of Poseidon.[1] Thus Euripides made more blood flow in some of his dramas than tradition demanded; he produced effects of tragic terror by heaping up deaths and multiplying catastrophes.

These effects, in the economy of the drama, may be produced in two different ways. According to Aristotle they may result either from the spectacle, or simply from the sequence of the facts. "To produce them from the inner structure of the play," says the great critic, "is the better way, and indicates a superior poet. The plot ought to be so constructed that, without an appeal to the eye, the hearer, on listening to the recital of what has occurred, will thrill with horror and pity at the turn of events. This is what we experience when we hear the story of Oedipus. To seek this effect by the mere spectacle is a less artistic method, and dependent on extraneous aids."[2] Aristotle here formulates one of the great laws of Greek tragedy: as a rule the terrible events which constitute its most usual dénouement do not take place upon the stage; we do not see them, we merely hear an account of them. This law, however, is not absolute. Aristotle allows spectacular effects, but he would not have them go beyond a certain limit. The terrible must not be carried to the point of the horrible. He says, "Those who by appealing to the eye seek to produce a sense not of the terrible, but simply of the monstrous (τὸ τερατῶδες), have nothing in common with the true tragic poet."

Did Euripides conform to this general precept of art? Though he rarely had recourse to the spectacle merely for the purpose of rousing terror, he frequently followed Aeschylus' example and used the spectacle to heighten and to prolong the emotional effect of the recital.[3] In his *Heracles* the messenger has hardly left the stage, when the doors of the palace are thrown wide open and

[1] Hyginus, *Fab.* 186. [2] Arist. *Poet.* xiv, p. 1453 b, 1–10.

[3] Cf. Voltaire's remarks in his dedication of *Tancrède:* "I well know that it is no great merit to appeal to the eye; but I venture to feel sure that the sublime and touching affect us much more sensibly when they are sustained by an appropriate display, and that the soul and the eyes should be appealed to at the same time."

we see, stretched upon the ground, by the side of the hero who sleeps an awful sleep, his three little children whom he has just murdered.[1] In the *Phoenician Maidens*, just as in Aeschylus, the bodies of Eteocles and Polyneices are brought upon the stage; and then also that of Iocasta.[2] Antigone intones her funeral lamentation before these three corpses; around them the aged Oedipus wanders, issuing like a phantom from his retreat, searching and groping with his blind hands for the remains of his sons and of her who was both his mother and his wife. In the *Suppliants*, as the result of the victory of the Athenians over the Thebans, the mothers of the Argive chiefs are to receive the bodies of their sons who have fallen beneath the walls of Thebes. This is known; but presently the seven corpses are seen, disfigured, covered with wounds, dripping with blood.[3] Perhaps only those on the stage were supposed to see these details, and they were not visible to the public. But we cannot be sure of this. Euripides certainly did not always refrain from exhibiting scenes of striking realism to the eye. The altar of the Taurian goddess, in the *Iphigeneia*, is red with blood, and on the walls of her sanctuary Orestes and Pylades see suspended human remains, the heads of strangers offered as sacrifices.[4] In the *Bacchanals* Agavè comes upon the stage carrying the bleeding head of her son Pentheus in her hands.[5] Although the spectator is warned that she is coming, and properly speaking should feel no surprise, the spectacle is nevertheless awful. Was it not of scenes of this nature that Aristotle was thinking when he demanded that the terrible should not be carried so far as to be monstrous?

Only once in his extant tragedies has Euripides done what Sophocles ventured in his *Ajax*,—exhibited a character in the act of putting an end to his life under the very eyes of the public. This takes place in a touching scene of the *Suppliants*.

The bodies of the Argive chiefs are to be given to the flames, amid the lamentations of their mothers. But the body of Capaneus, which is regarded as sacred because he was struck by Zeus' lightning, is not to be burnt with the others: it is placed upon a sepa-

[1] *Heracles*, 1029–1034.
[2] *Phoen. Maid.* 1480 *et seq.*
[3] *Suppliants*, 811, 812, 944, 945.
[4] *Iph. in Taur.* 72–75.
[5] *Bacch.* 1169 *et seq.*

rate funeral pyre, and is to be consumed apart. Suddenly, not upon the stage itself, but on the summit of a rock which towers above the palace and at whose base the pyre is placed, a woman is seen, decked in magnificent raiment, who rapidly advances and gives evidence of violent agitation. This is the wife of Capaneus, who has resolved not to survive him. The day on which she is to join her husband in death is to her a festive day with which she associates the happy memories of her marriage. Her exaltation, her mad love for her husband, her infatuate joy at the approach of death, are expressed in lyrical lines, rapid in their movement and original in their beauty.[1] At this point a new character arrives, the father of Evadne, the aged Iphis. He hastens on the track of his daughter, who has eluded his vigilance, hoping to arrive in time to prevent her mad act. At first he does not see her and questions the women of the chorus. Evadne herself answers him, and after a moment's dissimulation of her purpose, declares her fatal resolve. Iphis would prevent her, but is helpless. He is below on the stage; Evadne stands on top of the steep rock and defies his attempt. Suddenly she leaps from it and throws herself into the flames that envelop Capaneus' body.[2]

This is an example of those spectacular effects (διὰ τῆς ὄψεως) of which Aristotle speaks rather disparagingly. Although it has been prepared and announced somewhat in advance,[3] it does not result from the connection of events nor from the development of the plot. The sacrifice that Evadne makes of her life is in no way necessary and is nothing but an episode in the play. But this episode is stirring; it breaks the monotony of the lamentations and funeral ceremonies which occupy all the second part of the *Suppliants*. Only a very severe taste would blame Euripides for sustaining, by means of this felicitous episode and bold stage effect, the interest of a drama which might otherwise have ended feebly.

The examples which we have adduced do certainly show that the poet, at different times in his career, did not hesitate to select extraordinary stories with terrifying catastrophes—that he even exaggerated the powerful impression which a tragic drama should

[1] *Suppl.* 990–1008, 1012–1030. [2] *Suppl.* 1070.

[3] Cf. *Suppl.* 1015, 1045 *et seq.*, in which Evadne plainly declares what she is going to do.

convey, either by heaping up calamities or by displaying terrible spectacles.

II

PITY

CHILDREN AND MOTHERS

UNFORTUNATE HEROES

Thrasymachus of Chalcedon, a Sophist, who lived during the last years of Euripides' life, wrote a book on the *Art of Exciting Pity*.[1] Euripides had no need of the instruction of the rhetoricians in order to acquire and practise that art. He moved people by instinct rather than by any conscious effort; he had by nature that gift of tears which antiquity, by common consent, recognized in him. But before we express general views upon this subject, we must try to discover and analyze what particular methods peculiar to himself Euripides used in order to affect his spectators with the feeling of pity.

The pity which certain tragic characters inspire has its source not merely in the situations in which the poet places them and in the sentiments they express—sometimes it results also from their sex and their age. A woman who is a prey to a cruel moral pang will arouse more pity on the stage than a man, because she is a woman.[2] How much greater this is if she is also a mother! A child which is menaced by a great danger, or falls victim to a tragic catastrophe, will stir the heart more profoundly because, when we view the misfortune or death of a child, we cannot escape the feeling of distress which protests against the sight of an undeserved wrong. Euripides has repeatedly used this dramatic motive with success. Children are never seen in the dramas of Aeschylus, and a child appears but once,[3] and then incidentally, in Sophocles. In the *Ajax* the young Eurysaces is brought upon the stage to hear the farewell words of his father, who has resolved to fall upon his sword; he is seen again when Teucer brings him into the presence of the hero's body. But this child does not act, does not speak,—the in-

[1] Arist. *Rhet.* iii, 1, 7. Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 267 c.

[2] A remark which the poet puts on the lips of Megara, *Heracles*, 536.

[3] Hyllus, in the *Women of Trachis*, is not a child, but a young man.

terest he rouses when we see him hardly reaches the point of compassion. The children in Euripides affect us deeply because, in several of his plays, their future or even their life is at stake, and the poet does not limit himself to the spectacle of their youth and their innocence, but—and this is a new feature—allots them a part and lets them speak.

At the opening of the *Children of Heracles* the hero's sons, gathered under the unavailing protection of the aged Iolaus, form a mute group at the foot of the altar of Zeus.[1] But we know that they are menaced with death, that Eurystheus demands their surrender, and although they do not speak their presence on the stage under these circumstances redoubles the sympathy and the anxiety which their lot arouses. Astyanax also, in the *Daughters of Troy*, does not speak: he is a little child in his mother's arms, who clings to her and weeps, without a suspicion of the fate that awaits him, because he sees her weep. But what an effect the poet has produced by bringing this tiny victim, condemned to death by the Greeks, within our view, and how much more heartrending is the leave Andromache takes of her son because he is there upon her breast![2]

Sometimes children not only are present, but also take a certain part in the action. The poet at times introduces them in scenes of mourning which are rendered more touching by the spontaneous flow of their lamentations and the naïveté of their grief. By the side of Alcestis, who has just died, stand her husband Admetus and her two children, a little girl, and a young boy who, to judge from his language, may be ten years of age. It is this boy—the poet has given him a name, Eumelus—who is made to express, in lines of great simplicity notwithstanding their lyrical form, the impression that the death of a mother makes upon young children. "Alas," he cries, "how hard is my lot! My dear mother has left me and gone to the world below. She will never, father, see the sun again. She abandons me and leaves me an orphan. See, see her closed eyelids, her drooping hands!" Then he approaches and leans over the face of the dead woman: "Hear me, mother, listen to me, I beg you. It is I who call you, mother, I, your little child, my lips

[1] *Children of Heracles*, 48 *et seq.* Cf. 238. These children, as we see from verse 427, remain upon the stage.

[2] *Daughters of Troy*, 735 *et seq.*

over yours."[1] Is not this nature itself, and did not the spectators see with emotion in this dramatic fiction the picture of that cruel reality which was to be found in more than one Athenian home?

In the *Suppliants* children lament their fathers,—or, to be more accurate, one of them expresses the feelings of all. After the bodies of the seven Argive chiefs have been consumed by the flames, their eldest sons are seen coming upon the stage, each holding in his arms the urn which contains his father's ashes. This spectacular effect is presently heightened by pathetic wailing, by a funeral threnody which is divided between the chorus of the mothers of the slain chiefs and their sons, so that the mothers and the sons of the dead respond in symmetrical couplets. These boys, however, are almost adolescent. They know how their fathers died, and in thought they advance into the future; their sorrow is crossed, as it were, by flashes of anger and thoughts of vengeance. But the expression of lament predominates; they seem to see again the faces of their fathers, to whose loss they cannot resign themselves; they think that they hear their voices and they tenderly recall their caresses and kisses.[2] It is indubitable that the part here allotted to the children is happily conceived. Had the poet limited the manifestation of grief to the wailing of the women, and not aimed to secure the contrast of youth and of mature age united in the expression of a common sorrow, the pathetic effect of this scene would have been less powerful.

The rôle of young Molossus in the *Andromache* is still more dramatic. Molossus is the child of Hector's widow and Neoptolemus, whose bed Andromache has been forced to share after the capture of Troy. This child, like its mother, is pursued by the jealous hatred of Hermione, the legitimate wife of Pyrrhus. Hermione, during the absence of her lord, desires to put an end to her rival and her rival's son as well. Informed of her plot, Andromache has hidden Molossus, and has herself taken refuge at the sanctuary of Thetis, at the base of the altar. Meanwhile Menelaus, who is his daughter's accomplice, has discovered the child's hiding-place, goes in search of its mother, and proposes to her the most cruel of all alternatives: "If thou diest," he says, "thy son shall live; if thou refusest to die, I will slay him. One of you two must

[1] *Alcestis*, 393–403.

[2] *Suppl.* 1123–1164.

perish."[1] Andromache must needs succumb to the mother's instinct. In very beautiful verses she gives her reasons for dying that her son may live, and surrenders herself to her enemies. But Menelaus' proposal was only an odious scheme to tear Andromache from the protection of the gods. Hardly has she entered the palace, when we see her return with fettered hands, her child by her side; both have been condemned to death. Then there ensues between the mother and her son a short dialogue which must have moved the spectators to tears.

ANDROMACHE

Lo, blood my wrists red-staining
From cruel bonds hard-straining,
Lo, feet the grave's brink gaining!

MOLOSSUS

O mother, 'neath thy wing
I crouch where death-shades gather.

ANDROMACHE

Death!—Phthians, name it rather
Butchery!

MOLOSSUS

O my father,
Help to thy loved ones bring!

ANDROMACHE

There, darling, shalt thou rest
Pillowed upon my breast,
Where corpse to corpse shall cling.

MOLOSSUS

Ah me, the torture looming
O'er me, o'er thee!—the coming,
Mother, of what dread thing? . . .

ANDROMACHE

Oh for that hand I cry on!
Ah husband, to rely on
Thy spear, O Priam's scion!

MOLOSSUS

Ah woe is me! What spell
Find I for doom's undoing?

[1] *Androm.* 381–383.

When she hears her son fighting against approaching death, Andromache makes a last effort: she hopes that Menelaus will be moved to pity at the sight of a child that weeps and implores mercy. She forgets her hatred, her dignity:

ANDROMACHE

Pray, at thy lord's knees suing,
Child!

MOLOSSUS (*kneeling to Menelaus*)

Friend, in mercy ruing
My death, of pardon tell![1]

The limit of pathos is reached. It is time that the intervention of Peleus should end so painful a situation, by averting Menelaus' criminal attempt, and that the spectators should be gradually granted the satisfaction of seeing the two victims escape from danger and young Molossus help the aged Peleus undo the fetters which torture his mother's arms.

In the first part of the *Heracles* the position of Megara and her three sons is analogous to that of Andromache and Molossus: a mother is condemned to die with her children, but is saved with them by an unexpected intervention. Heracles has left Thebes to complete the last of his labors, the descent into Hades, whence it is feared he will never return, so long is he absent. A tyrant named Lycus has taken advantage of his absence to usurp the throne of Thebes; he has slain Creon, the father of Megara, and wishes to complete his work by putting out of the way Megara herself and the children she has had by Heracles. These children are seen at the opening of the play grouped as suppliants round an altar with their mother and the aged Amphitryon; they do not speak upon the stage, but their words are reported, and they play a large part in the drama, because of the sympathy that is felt in their fate, and of the interest which they themselves take in the events that occur. Megara tells how anxiously they inquired of her about Heracles, whom they resemble — they have the same gleaming eyes.[2] "Mother," they say, "to what land has our father gone? What is he doing? When will he return?"[3] They are present in the scene in which the tyrant Lycus comes to announce to the suppliants

[1] *Androm.* 501–531. [2] *Heracles*, 130–132. [3] *Heracles*, 74, 75.

that they must die, and that a funeral pyre will be lighted about the altar which serves them as a refuge. They hear Megara ask as a favor to be allowed to bedeck them with funeral ornaments. When she has been given this permission, we see them return to the stage dressed in mourning raiment, to listen to their mother's farewell.[1] They also share in the happy change of fortune brought about by the sudden arrival of Heracles, not with boisterous joy, but after the manner of children who are still under the spell of a great excitement—they cling to their father and will not let him go. And we see the colossal Heracles lead these little beings away,—he, the hero, treating them with bluff but tender care, like any honest father of a family who comes back to his hearth after a long absence. He says:

> "And ye, let go my cloak.
> I am not winged, nor would I fly my friends.
> Ha!
> These let not go, but hang upon my cloak
> Only the more! Was doom so imminent then?
> E'en must I lead them clinging to my hands,
> As ship that tows her boats. Not I reject
> Care of my sons."[2]

This gracious and familiar tenderness of Heracles is brought into contrast, as the drama progresses, with an awful event, the slaughter of these same children by their insane father. But in this last scene, which is merely described, and is not seen, it is not terror alone that prevails; pity enters into it. The poet does not let Heracles' children fall as mute victims. One of them, at whom his father has aimed an arrow, rushes forward, falls at his feet and with suppliant voice implores his mercy. Who but a madman could have resisted this child's supplication, the effect of which in the theatre can easily be imagined?

Medea's children do not say much, but they are often present, either actually on the stage, or to the thought of their barbarian mother. At the very beginning of the drama, the poet shows them to us returning from play in charge of a slave, and the sight of their guileless youth brings out more saliently the presentiments to which the nurse gives utterance regarding them, and adds sig-

[1] *Heracles*, 442 *et seq.* [2] *Heracles*, 627–633.

nificance to the cry of malediction which Medea in her sombre rage utters against them. But they are not left out of the action of the play: it is they whom their mother bids carry to Jason's new wife the presents which her vengeance has destined for her. When they return Medea is troubled by the sight of them. She cannot support their frank, open glances, nor the sweetness of their smile.[1] It seems as if the emotion which she now feels would quite take possession of her heart and drive far away her sombre determination, as if she would cease to be the jealous wife and again become the mother. But she resists, and in resisting suffers cruelly, because in spite of herself she feels the charm against which she struggles. This unnatural mother yields a last time to nature: she desires to touch her children, to embrace them:

> "Give, O my babes,
> Give to your mother the right hand to kiss.
> O dearest hand, O lips most dear to me,
> O form and noble feature of my children,
> Blessing be on you—*there!*—for all things here
> Your sire hath reft. O sweet, O sweet embrace!
> O children's roseleaf skin, O balmy breath!
> Away, away! Strength faileth me to gaze
> On you, but I am overcome of evil.
> [*Exeunt children*]
> Now, now, I learn what horrors I intend:
> But passion overmastereth sober thought."[2]

A soliloquy might have expressed the conflicting emotions that at this point rend Medea's heart. Euripides chose to place this mother in the presence of her children in order that the struggle that takes place within her may be more terrible, that her resolve may appear more dreadful, and that we may better gauge the intensity of the passion by which she is possessed. That passion will last to the end: Medea will slay her children. But this atrocious deed will not simply be described: the echoes of the murder which is done behind the scenes will be heard on the stage itself. The cries of the terror-stricken children, who flee from Medea's knife, the hurried words which they exchange, are to reach the ears of the audience. "Alas! alas!" one of them cries. "What shall I do? Where

[1] *Medea*, 1040 *et seq.*

[2] *Medea*, 1069–1079.

can I escape my mother's hands?"—"I know not, dearest brother," replies the other; "we are lost!" Then, as the chorus declares its intention to go into the palace: "Yea, for the gods' sake, help!" they both cry; "sore is our need—another moment and we fall beneath the sword."[1] The despairing appeal of these childish voices adds the emotion of heartrending pity to the horror of the slaughter.[2]

This was an innovation on the Athenian stage, which heretofore had slighted childhood. In the heroic drama, as Aeschylus and Sophocles had conceived it, children hardly appear, because a child is merely the outline of a being; its moral life is still locked up in a narrow sphere; it has neither the fulness, nor the variety, nor the command of those emotions which one has the right to expect in a tragic hero. Euripides made tragedy more human and found place for the child. A child's fate calls into play the strongest emotion known to the heart of woman, and the poet understood how by means of this innovation to produce some very dramatic scenes and to rouse emotions of exceptional power.

He went still farther in this direction: he wished to offer the spectacle of the grief by which a mother is stricken who suddenly loses her child. This was the main feature of a tragedy performed in the last years of Euripides' life,[3] the *Hypsipyle*, whose plot was as follows: The Argive chiefs who accompanied Adrastus and Polyneices upon their expedition against Thebes, on arriving at Nemea, made search—so the story-tellers narrate—for a spring. They failed to find one, but met Hypsipyle, who was busy watching a young child under her charge, Opheltes, the son of Lycurgus and Eurydice. This woman offered to lead the heroes to a neighboring fountain and left the child upon the greensward. When she re-

[1] *Medea*, 1271–1278.

[2] The following are some less striking examples. In the *Theseus* the spectators saw and heard the Athenian children who were destined to be sacrificed to the Minotaur. Of the lamentations of these young victims only one cry has been preserved: "O my unhappy mother, why didst thou bring me forth?" (Aristoph. *Wasps*, 312, and schol. 313; Nauck, fragm. 283). The child Hippolytus played a part in this play, but we do not know what his rôle was (schol. Aristoph. *Wasps*, 313). In the *Erechtheus* a youth was seen by the side of a dying father who gave him his last admonitions (Stob. *Flor.* iii, 18; Nauck, fragm. 362).

[3] In 408 or even in 407, as the scholiast on Aristophanes' *Frogs* (53) seems to show, when he cites the *Hypsipyle* as among the tragedies played "a short time before the *Frogs*."

turned, she found it dead: a dragon had killed it.[1] We can imagine how she then broke forth in groans and how bitter were her regrets. But how much more poignant was the mother's despair! This despair is portrayed on a vase-painting, which was probably inspired by a scene in Euripides' drama. A woman in rich costume, a queen, is seated in the interior of a palace in an attitude of silent grief, supporting her head on her hand; on her knees lies outstretched the body of a child, whose breast bears the mark of a bleeding wound. On the queen's right stands a warrior, with one hand resting on a shield, while with the other he makes a gesture of exhortation: this is Amphiaraus, whose words of vain consolation to the mother who has been so cruelly afflicted are still in part extant.[2] We get still more accurate information regarding the pathetic character of the *Hypsipyle* from the painting on a large amphora from Ruvo, now in the Museum in Naples (pl. iii). One of the scenes depicted by the artist shows Archemorus lying upon a bier surrounded by mourning servants, and receiving funeral honors; a woman with white hair, possibly his grandmother, approaches the child's body to place a wreath upon its head. In the upper row is seen the child's mother, Eurydice; she stands in an attitude of grief by the side of a woman who leans toward her and supplicates her: this is the unhappy and careless Hypsipyle, in whose behalf Amphiaraus appears to intervene, but the queen apparently is unwilling to listen to him.[3]

[1] The writers who repeat this story agree (Apollod. iii, 6, 4; schol. Clem. Alex. p. 424, 19; Hyginus, *Fab.* 74). A fragment of Euripides' *Hypsipyle*, quoted by Plutarch (*Mor.* p. 93 d), refers to the young child picking flowers in the meadow. Opheltes is better known by the name Archemorus, which, it is said, was given him by Amphiaraus. It is well known that the Greeks gave the story of his death as the explanation of the origin of the Nemean games, which were founded in honor of his memory.

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 110 f. Stob. *Flor.* 108, 11. Nauck, fragm. 757. The vase in question is an amphora signed with the name of Lasimus, now in the Louvre (Millin, *Peint. de vases*, vol. ii, p. 37; Overbeck, *Gallerie*, pl. xxviii, 1). The names of the figures are not given, but Vogel's interpretation, which we adopt, is pretty nearly certain.

[3] This painting, which has been very carefully studied by Vogel (*Scenen euripideischer Tragödien*, p. 99), has often been reproduced. See especially the plate in Gerhard's essay, *Archemorus und die Hesperiden* (*Gesamm. Abhandl.* i, 5), and Quaranta, *Mem. dell' Accad. Ercol.* vol. iv, pl. 1. A scene showing the Argive chiefs slaying the dragon, which is coiled around the body of Archemorus, is found upon two other vases described by Vogel, and on a bas-relief in the Spada palace (Overbeck, *Bilder d. theb. und troj. Heldenkr.* p. 110), but it is not certain that this scene is taken from Euripides' drama.

(*iii*) SCENES FROM THE HYPSIPYLE OF EURIPIDES

We easily imagine to what a degree scenes like this, when developed by such a poet as Euripides, must have stirred the heart. Aeschylus, who had dealt with the same subject in his *Nemea*,[1] cannot have moved his audience more deeply.

In situations of another kind, nothing was better calculated to rouse pity than the spectacle, seen in the *Orestes*, of a brother and a sister condemned to death, in sad converse with one another before the fatal moment. After the murder of Clytemnestra, Orestes and his accomplice Electra have been brought to trial by the people of Argos. In vain has he tried to plead his cause: condemned to death with Electra, he has succeeded merely in escaping the agony of stoning, and has sworn that the day shall not end before he and his sister have killed themselves. It is at this moment that they both appear upon the stage: Electra, deeply dejected, bewailing, not her own fate—she has sacrificed her life—but that of her brother; Orestes, more resolute, weakening for a moment when his sister puts her arms about him, but promptly regaining all his fortitude.[2] The interest of this scene consists first in the situation—unique in Greek drama—of a brother and sister ready to commit suicide together, not because they have of their own accord determined to die, but because they are forced to this death by virtue of the condemnation of the court; secondly in the contrast of Electra's despair with Orestes' steadfastness.

Not all Euripides' characters are so strong. The expression of moral suffering is carried by some of them to the point of excess. Alcestis, so heroic at other times, cannot control her emotion at sight of her nuptial couch: she does more than weep, she floods the couch with a torrent of tears.[3] Megara, condemned to death with her sons, wishes—with a feeling whose expression amounts almost to subtlety—that she might "gather the sobs of all her children, take them to herself and blend them in a flood of tears."[4] The grief of the Theban mothers, in the chorus of the *Suppliants*, pours itself out in wailing, "as inexhaustible as the stream of water that falls from a steep rock."[5] There is nothing surprising in the

1 Schol. Pind. *Nem.* prol. p. 9. Aeschylus makes Archemorus the son, not of Eurydice, but of the local nymph Nemea, whence the title of his play.

2 *Orestes*, 1018–1068.

3 *Alcestis*, 183, 184.

4 *Heracles*, 487 *et seq.*

5 *Suppl.* 79 *et seq.*

fact that the women in Euripides' tragedies often weep, because woman, as the poet himself says,[1] is a weak creature, by nature prone to tears. But even the men in his dramas occasionally bemoan themselves without sufficient cause. For example, Adrastus, the leader of the Argives who have fallen before Thebes, stands at the door of Demeter's temple in an attitude denoting profound despair: his head is hidden in his cloak, and moreover he sobs; "he makes piteous moan."[2] Has he lost child, or wife, or mother? He has lost only his comrades in war. Thus Euripides, under certain circumstances, has made his epic heroes weep,—heroes from whom bodily suffering might well have elicited groans, but whom the earlier poets depicted as better proof against moral suffering. The fact is that the epic heroes have become men, subject to all kinds of weakness. The excess noticeable in their expression of grief is therefore quite in harmony with the poet's conception of tragedy.

The effect of these various emotions was sometimes heightened by the staging, to which Euripides appears to have given more attention than Sophocles. The pity that his characters awaken arises not only from the situations and from the dialogue, but also from the spectacle itself. At the opening of several of his dramas,[3] we see women, children, aged men, gathered about the altar of a god. These groups, whose harmonious arrangement delights the eye, at the same time touch the heart; these suppliants, in fact, are helpless beings who have sought refuge in the protection of the gods only because it is their sole resource against the perils impending over them. Before a word is spoken, the mere sight of them rouses interest; their demeanor and their costume appeal to the eye. Costume is one of the external means that Euripides most often employed, if not to rouse, at least to increase pity. Iocasta, in the *Phoenician Maidens*, wears no white veils after the departure of Polyneices: she dresses in black and torn garments, as a token of mourning.[4] The Argive mothers, in the *Suppliants*, who come to claim their sons' bodies, have their locks shorn and wear garments "which are not festive garments."[5] The

[1] *Medea*, 928. [2] *Suppliants*, 104.

[3] In the *Children of Heracles*, *Heracles*, *Suppliants*, to mention only extant plays.

[4] *Phoen. Maid.* 324–326. [5] *Suppl.* 97.

children of Heracles, and those of Melanippe, about to be led off to death, are dressed by their mothers in funeral garb. In fact more than one character comes upon the stage in a piteous state and in tatters.

Here we meet one of the strongest and most persistent criticisms to which Euripides was subjected by Aristophanes. If we listen to the latter, this theatrical treatment of misery on the stage is, in many of Euripides' plays, the essential and most important thing: "Take away," he says, "the tatters from his people, and his dramas vanish."[1] The form of this criticism makes manifest its exaggeration; but how can we properly estimate its value, as the tragedies which Aristophanes had in mind are, with the exception of a few fragments, now lost? There can be no doubt, however, that Euripides had a certain predilection for plots in which kings, leaders of peoples, once possessed of the respect and admiration of everybody, fall, through their own fault or through a fatal series of circumstances, to the lowest depths of humiliation. Bellerophon, Oeneus and Telephus were fallen heroes of this type. We shall not revert to Bellerophon, of whom we have spoken. Of the others Oeneus, an Aetolian prince who had been for a long time fortunate and powerful, after the death of his son Tydeus, and during the absence of his grandson Diomedes, who had gone on an expedition against the Thebans, had his throne usurped by the sons of his brother Agrius. Driven from the palace and out of the city, and despoiled of everything, this king was forced to wander from door to door and beg for bread, until the day when he was avenged by Diomedes and by him reinstated in authority.[2] In the case of the king of Mysia, the Telephus who amused Aristophanes so much, poverty was chiefly a disguise. From the extant fragments of the tragedy of which he was the hero, it appears that it served his purpose not to be recognized upon his return to Argos, his native land. He says:

[1] *Acharn.* 464, 470.

[2] Schol. Aristoph. *Acharn.* 418. Hyginus (*Fab.* 175) tells a somewhat different story. According to him it is Agrius himself who drives out Oeneus and who usurps his throne. Diomedes, upon his return from Troy, slays Lycopeus, the son of Agrius, deprives the latter of his throne and gives it back to his grandfather. After these occurrences, Agrius kills himself. The version of the scholiast, who may have known Euripides' play, is perhaps the preferable one.

"A beggar must I seem to be this day,
And be, but not appear, the man I am."[1]

Thus Telephus came upon the stage dressed like a poor devil. Aristophanes gives us a description of his costume: for clothes, rags; on his head a Mysian cap; in his right hand a beggar's staff; on his left arm a small basket containing a little earthenware pot and a nicked porringer.[2] Other kings also in Euripides' dramas appear in the garb of poor unfortunates. Menelaus, shipwrecked on the shore of Egypt, after the sea has swallowed up his costly garments and his mantles of purple, is in very pitiable plight: as sole cover for his nakedness he has a few scant shreds of cloth, and his appearance is so wretched that, king though he is, he is refused admission to the Egyptian palace by the old woman who stands guard at the gate.[3] Philoctetes, on Lemnus, dragging his ulcerated foot from his cave, his face furrowed by deep wrinkles, with hair and beard dishevelled and the skin of a wild animal thrown over the rags that barely covered his emaciated body,[4] was still more pitiable.

The poet's purpose is unmistakable. He means to awaken pity for some of his characters, not only through the contrast afforded by extreme lowliness succeeding the highest rank, but also by presenting to the eye the external evidences of their poverty and the repulsive ugliness of their infirmities.[5] But are these beggar kings, these limping heroes, on whom Aristophanes lets loose his inexhaustible humor, really peculiar to the dramas of Euripides?

In Sophocles, Oedipus is a king, reduced like Oeneus to beggary, afflicted like Bellerophon with a cruel infirmity. Old and blind, he wanders hither and thither under his daughter's guidance; his clothes, never changed, are filthy and tattered; his white "uncombed" hair flies in the wind; he carries coarse food, the meagre pittance meant to sustain what there is left to him of life.[6] Sopho-

[1] Nauck, fragm. 698. Cf. 697, 703.

[2] *Acharn.* 432–463. Telephus' beggar's sack and staff were celebrated in antiquity. Diog. Laert. vi, 87. Max. Tyr. vii, 10, p. 77, Davis, etc.

[3] *Helen*, 420, 437 *et seq.*

[4] Dio Chrysost. *Orat.* 59, 5. Cf. Aristoph. *Acharn.* 423, 424.

[5] Aristoph. *Frogs*, 1063, 1064.

[6] *Oedipus Colon.* 1258 *et seq.* Electra, in the tragedy of that name, is very poorly attired; she is probably dressed like a slave (190, 191; cf. 451).

cles' Philoctetes has no cover save a few bits of cloth.[1] The malady from which he suffers is in no way disguised; repeatedly the poet calls attention to his ghastly wound, from which ooze fetid pus and black blood. At one point, this wound reopens, and in the presence of Neoptolemus, Philoctetes is attacked by a spasm that tortures him and wrings from him heartrending cries on the very stage.[2] Thus Sophocles also has given us representations of heroes who beg or are afflicted with repulsive infirmities. But we must not forget that Euripides' *Philoctetes* antedates that of Sophocles by twenty-three years and that the *Oedipus at Colonus* was not performed until after both poets were dead. It is therefore possible that Sophocles merely followed his younger rival in these delineations and that he had the approval of public taste in doing this —and that, as some passages in Aristophanes seem to indicate, the introduction of these innovations[3] is really to be traced to Euripides. These innovations, moreover, are quite in keeping with the spirit of his dramas. We can hardly affirm that by the degradation of heroes he sought on the stage to humiliate those in power, just as he raised the humble; but the picture he draws of their misfortunes bears a resemblance to the saddest realities of that everyday life whose gloomier aspects his pessimism led him particularly to contemplate. It may be that this picture is exaggerated and unduly sombre; like a painter who delights in violent tones and contrasts, Euripides, no doubt, exaggerated his effects; he demanded of the stage-setting more than it had previously afforded and more than it ought to afford. This at least is the hypothesis suggested by the criticisms of the comic poets.

III

ADMIRATION—SELF-SACRIFICE

Those who heard the tragedies of Euripides were not only moved by pity or smitten with fear; they sometimes experienced an emo-

[1] *Philoct.* 274, 309. [2] *Philoct.* 783–798.

[3] There is nothing like this in Aeschylus. Xerxes, after his defeat, has torn his regal robes into shreds. Atossa goes to meet him in order to bring him garments suitable to his high office. When he appears on the stage (*Persians*, 852, Weil), he is the king.

tion of another kind,—admiration. It is true that this feeling is not one of the essential resources of tragedy, where it is rarely found by itself, but almost always mingled with pity. Aristotle, who, in his *Poetics*, formulates only the most general laws, does not mention it. It seems, however, to have occupied a sufficiently important place in Euripides' dramas to warrant its special consideration.

The legendary history of Greece is replete with voluntary sacrifices made by fathers and mothers, generally kings and queens, who, in order to save their country from disaster or to assure to it victory over an enemy, devote their own children to death, thereby constituting them the expiatory offerings demanded by the gods. Euripides found pleasure in treating some of these themes, in themselves very dramatic, because they bring into conflict two equally powerful sentiments: love of children and love of country. The following are examples: Andromeda, daughter of king Cepheus, had boasted that she excelled the Nereids in beauty. In punishment of her insolence, Poseidon let loose upon the country a great flood and raised against it a sea-monster which devastated its shores. When the oracle of Ammon was consulted, it declared that to secure deliverance Andromeda must be delivered over to the monster. After a cruel struggle, Cepheus finally decided to obey the god's advice: he had his daughter chained to a rock on the shore, where she was about to be devoured, when Perseus, her deliverer, came upon the scene.[1] We do not know in what manner the decision of Cepheus[2] was expressed in the *Andromeda*, nor whether the pity awakened by the fate of the young girl did not overshadow admiration for the rugged virtue of the father.[3] We are better informed about the *Erechtheus*, which presented an analogous situation.—At the time when Erechtheus, whose wife was Praxithea, daughter of Cephisus, ruled in Athens, the Thracian king Eumolpus set out, at the head

[1] Eratosthenes (*Catast.* 15, 17), who, as he states, gives a résumé of the subject matter of Euripides' tragedy, acquaints us with its conclusion: Andromeda, once freed, did not care to continue to live with her parents—she followed her savior. On this drama see especially C. Robert, *Arch. Zeitung*, vol. xxxvi (1878), pp. 16–20; Wecklein, *Sitz.-Berichte d. Akad. München*, vol. i (1888), pp. 87–98.

[2] The fairly numerous fragments of the *Andromeda* (fragm. 114–156, Nauck) almost all refer to the part of Perseus or to that of the young girl.

[3] It will be observed that the position in which Cepheus is placed is about that of Agamemnon in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and that of Athamas in the *Phrixus* (Apollod. i, 9, 1; Hyg. *Fab.* 2, 3).

of a great army, to invade Attica. Erechtheus, menaced by this danger, hastened to consult the Delphian god as to the means of triumphing over his enemy. The god answered that if the king of Athens slew his daughter before the battle began victory would be his. To save his country Erechtheus was prepared to obey the god, but he was not alone in this resolution. His wife Praxithea, far from claiming her daughter's life at her husband's hands, as Clytemnestra did, had a soul lofty and brave enough to silence her natural feeling and to overcome, for the sake of her native land, the revolt of her maternal instincts. She consented to the sacrifice of her daughter and gave reasons for it, which, to our thinking, are rather subtile and too laboriously deduced, but which no doubt were more to the taste of Euripides' contemporaries than they are to ours. These are her chief reasons:

"One name the whole state hath, but many dwell
Therein: how dare I give to ruin these,
I who for all can yield my one to death?
If in mine halls I had, in daughter's stead,
Male seed, and flame of war enwrapped this town,
Should I for dread of death forbear to send them
Forth to the strife of spears? Nay, be my sons
Such as shall fight, and win renown with men,
Not be vain outward shows our walls within.
When mothers' tears escort their sons to war,
Oft they unman them on the verge of fight.
Out upon women, who, in glory's stead,
Choose for their sons life, counsel craven fear.
My child—mine only according to the flesh—
I give for my land's ransom. . . .
Countrymen, use ye this fruit of my womb:
Be saved, be victors! For it cannot be
But I will save this city at one life's cost.
My country, O that all who people thee
Might love thee even as I!—then should we dwell
At ease in thee, thou never suffer harm."[1]

We must not mistake the effect which language such as this would produce in the Athenian theatre. The orator Lycurgus has indicated it in his oration *Against Leocrates*.[2] He quotes the verses,

[1] Fragm. 362, verse 16 *et seq.*, Nauck. [2] § 100.

but before quoting them admonishes his audience that they will find in them "a greatness of spirit and a nobility worthy indeed of Athens." Praxithea, sacrificing her daughter to her native land, did not appear to be an unnatural mother; she was a brave mother. Elsewhere in the action of the tragedy, the spectators felt pity for the young girl, but at this point she was forgotten, and pity gave way to a sentiment of a higher order,—admiration.

In other tragedies this feeling was inspired by the victim. Polyxena, who, when about to be slain on the tomb of Achilles, is unwilling that anybody should touch her, and with quick gesture tears her gown, bares her breast and offers it to the knife of Neoptolemus,[1] affords an example of the finest courage in the face of death. Iphigeneia, when she learns the fate that awaits her, at first rebels against the thought of death: we hear her implore her father not to deprive her of the light that is so sweet to behold, not to force her to descend before her allotted time into the darkness of the nether world which terrifies her; she begs Agamemnon, who averts his eyes, for a look and a kiss; she calls upon the young Orestes to help her touch the heart of her father. Left alone with Clytemnestra, she pours forth her sobs and her despair. But presently, upon reflection, the young girl's feelings undergo a change; they become purer and loftier. Insensibly, her thoughts are removed from the joys of earthly existence, and dwell upon an ideal of self-sacrifice whose glory attracts and dazzles her: "I have resolved to die," she says to her mother, and she justifies her resolution by about the same arguments that served Praxithea in explaining hers:

> "Unto me all mighty Hellas looks: I only can bestow
> Boons upon her—sailing of her galleys, Phrygia's overthrow. . . .
> *Must* I live, that clutching life with desperate hand I should be found?
> For the good of Hellenes didst thou bear me, not for thine alone." [2]

Henceforward Iphigeneia is no longer a victim who resigns herself to death; she is a heroic girl who proceeds of her own accord and with a sort of enthusiasm to a glorious immolation. She does not wish those about her to weep—the sacred ceremony in which she is to be sacrificed for the salvation of all shall be a festival which

[1] *Hecuba*, 546–565. [2] *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 1378 *et seq.*

the women celebrate with dances and a joyous paean in honor of Artemis. At the last moment, her feelings are unchanged:

> "My father, at thine hest I come,
> And for my country's sake my body give,
> And for all Hellas, to be led of you
> Unto the Goddess' altar, willingly,
> And sacrificed, since this is Heaven's decree.
> Prosper, so far as rests with me, and win
> Victory, and return to fatherland."[1]

The messenger says that, while listening to the young girl, all were astonished at her great spirit and courage. We may be sure that those who listened to his account got the same impression. They thought less of pitying Iphigeneia than of admiring her as a perfect example of renunciation, of that absolute devotion of an individual to his country of which the actual history of Greece afforded so many examples in the past, and of which we may well believe more than one Athenian in Euripides' day was still capable.

This devotion constitutes also the main interest of a beautiful episode in the *Phoenician Maidens*. Just as the struggle between the Theban and the Argive leaders is about to begin, Creon summons Tiresias into his presence. The aged soothsayer is led in by his daughter, and is accompanied by Creon's son Menoeceus, who has gone to fetch him. The coming events that he is about to announce to the king are terrible. Oedipus' curse has borne its fruit: the hour draws near in which Eteocles and Polyneices are to fall, slain by one another. Although the death of the two brothers is inevitable, there still remains a means of saving Thebes: Tiresias possesses the secret, but he trembles at the thought of revealing it. Finally, when Creon presses him with questions, he speaks. The god of war, Ares, demands, as his price for befriending Thebes, a human victim of the blood of the Sparti (the Sown). Now, of that family there are left only Creon and his sons, and as the victim must be young, it is Menoeceus who is meant. Creon grows angry and rebels against the oracle. His son, on hearing his name spoken,

[1] *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 1552 *et seq.* There seems to be no doubt that the narrative of the messenger, although the text has been much emended, is actually by Euripides. Such likewise is the opinion of the best critic on this subject, H. Weil. See his note on the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, pages 311–313, and his critical commentary on verse 1552, towards the close.

says not a word. His resolution is already fixed when the soothsayer leaves the stage. He will not attempt to discuss the matter with his father, who cares less than he for his country; on the contrary he will pretend to share his views, so as not to be hampered in carrying out his plan. But hardly has Creon gone, when, in the presence of the chorus, he declares himself ready to devote himself for all and to offer up his life as the sacrifice which is required for the safety of Thebes:

> "But no forgiveness should be mine
> If I betray the city of my birth. . . .
> 'Twere shame that men no oracles constrain,
> Who have not fall'n into the net of fate,
> Shoulder to shoulder stand, blench not from death,
> Fighting before the towers for fatherland,
> And I, betraying father, brother, yea,
> My city, craven-like flee forth the land—
> A dastard manifest, where'er I dwell!"

And he closes with the same remark that Praxithea makes in the *Erechtheus*,—a remark which is an exhortation that the poet addresses to his audience:

> "For, if each man would take his all of good,
> Lavish it, lay it at his country's feet,
> Then fewer evils should the nations prove,
> And should through days to come be prosperous."[1]

Menoeceus does not appear again; there is indeed no further mention of him in the drama; but the issue of the tragedy—the triumph of Thebes—is our guarantee that Creon's son has kept his word. Moreover, of what consequence would the details of his lonely death have been? They would have been less touching than that resolution to sacrifice himself, so beautiful in its simplicity.

There is another kind of self-devotion that Euripides has also made the object of admiration: that of women or of young girls who are ready to give up their lives in order to save those near and dear to them from death. The drama of the *Children of Heracles* affords a remarkable example of this. Eurystheus, king of Argos, has just arrived before Marathon, at the head of an

[1] *Phoenician Maidens*, 995–1018.

army, in order to demand by force the surrender of Heracles' children, whom Demophon, king of Attica, refuses to yield. The Athenians are in arms, ready to engage in battle. But before the battle the seers seek to propitiate the gods by means of sacrifices, and Demophon searches into ancient oracles which closely concern the safety of the state. These prophecies all agree in one particular: they command the sacrifice to Persephone of a virgin, "whose father must be of a noble race:" that is the price of victory. But where is such a victim to be found? Demophon is greatly troubled; he declares that he will not slay his own daughter and that he cannot constrain any one of his fellow-citizens to sacrifice his for the sake of strangers. Thus, notwithstanding the good-will of Athens, Iolaus must find some other means of safety for the children of Heracles. When this is announced, the aged Iolaus despairs: he sees the time approach when through noncompliance with the condition demanded by the oracles, he will be abandoned by his protectors, and the children who are his charge may perhaps be surrendered with him to Eurystheus. At this critical point in the plot Macaria, one of the daughters of Heracles, comes forth from the temple where she and her sisters have been confined in the care of Alcmena. She has heard Iolaus' groans, and wishes to know their cause. He explains the situation to her and tells her of the command of the oracles. She asks: "On these terms hangeth our deliverance?" Upon the affirmative answer of Iolaus, the young girl at once, without hesitation, almost without reflection, offers herself with spontaneous impulse as the victim demanded by the gods.

> "Then dread no more the Argive foemen's spear.
> Myself—I wait no bidding, ancient—am
> Ready to die, and yield me to be slain."

Her surrender of herself is so complete that her self-sacrifice seems to be made without effort; she finds arguments to prove to herself that it is advantageous for her to leave this life. If, through her fault, the city were taken, how much more unfortunate would she be, after falling into the hands of her enemies! If she is driven forth from Athens, wherever she goes, in her wandering life, she will be accused of cowardice; no man will take to wife a girl with-

out courage, who has failed to sacrifice herself and save her people. Death, then, is for her alike the finest and the best lot:

> "Lead on to where this body needs must die:
> Wreathe me, begin the rite, if this seem good.
> Vanquish your foes; for ready is this life,
> Willing, ungrudging. Yea, I pledge me now
> For these my brothers' sake, and mine, to die.
> For treasure-trove most fair, by loving not
> Life, have I found, — with glory to quit life."[1]

Iolaus, full of admiration, but moved also by pity, suggests to the young girl that the victim be designated by lot from among all the sisters. Macaria refuses, in order, as she says, not to lose the merit of her resolve; she is eager to offer up her life. In the end Iolaus agrees to her self-sacrifice, in the presence of Demophon, who hails her as "brave above all women." Nought remains for her but to say farewell to the aged man and to her brothers, who, in silent grief, gather close about her.[2] This farewell, so resolute in tone,[3] could not fail to move the audience. But the chief impression — both the chorus and Iolaus express it — was unqualified admiration for an heroic act, freely and modestly performed.

Alcestis is to be admired even more than Macaria. Her self-sacrifice is so little demanded by circumstances, and she has so many reasons for living! Her children would suffice to constrain her to cling to life, to make her appreciate its value. But Alcestis is wife first and mother afterwards: it is for her husband that she desires to die. Her determination to do this is of so lofty an order and presupposes a degree of self-renunciation so extraordinary that it almost oversteps the limits of probability. Alcestis' devotion was a tale furnished by tradition; it seems impossible that any poet would have dared to invent it. This is a wife who consents to die for her husband's sake, though that husband is not indispensable to his family and to his country, for the sole reason that there is no other way by which he may prolong his stay on earth! This is a wife who makes up her mind thus to die, not thoughtlessly nor in a moment of exaltation, but after due reflec-

[1] *Children of Heracles*, 500–534. [2] *Children of Heracles*, 539–607.

[3] It is a pity that it ends with a sceptical remark which diminishes the emotion we at first experience.

tion and deliberately; who, a fortunate queen, a happy mother, in the exuberance and glory of youth, devotes herself to death,—and to a lingering death,—which she sees slowly coming on, and whose approach she can measure; a woman who, amid distress and tears which serve to heighten the quality of her sacrifice, attains by degrees complete self-forgetfulness, complete indifference to her own fate. Alcestis, sacrificing her life, which was dear to her, that Admetus might live, is the superhuman ideal of a wife's devotion. The Greeks were right when they said that there was something divine in that devotion.[1]

We see, then, that admiration has its place in Euripides, a place more or less important, according to the dramas in which it is brought into play. We can hardly say that the sacrifice of Menoeceus and that of Macaria are mere episodes, for the catastrophe of the *Phoenician Maidens* and that of the *Children of Heracles* depend in part upon that sacrifice; but the noble figures of these young people merely appear and disappear; the very vivid emotion which they arouse is incidental and secondary. Admiration may have played a larger part in the *Erechtheus*, and it is more prolonged in the *Iphigeneia*, in which it follows upon pity and is still commingled with it. Finally, in the *Alcestis*, admiration is the dominant if not the only feeling. How could Aristophanes, however much misled by a spirit of antagonism and by personal animosity, forget the scenes which we have just mentioned, or intentionally shut his eyes to their beauties?

[1] Plato, *Symposium*, vii (p. 179 b, c). Cf. the fine passage in Fénelon (*Sur le pur amour*, vol. i, pp. 332, 333, edition of Didot): "Then Plato cites the example of Alcestis, who died that her husband might live. Here we have, according to Plato, that which makes a man a god: to prefer another to one's self, through love, even to the point of forgetting one's self, of sacrificing one's self, of counting one's self as nothing. According to him, such love as this is a divine inspiration. . . . Alcestis is the wonder of mankind in that she was ready to die and be naught but an empty shade, that he might live whom she loved. Such self-forgetfulness, such complete surrender of one's being, such supreme renunciation of existence, for all time, is, in the eyes of all the pagans, the divinest thing in man."

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CHAPTER III

ACTION

I

MULTIPLICITY OF INCIDENTS
RECOGNITIONS

THE most favorable of Euripides' critics in antiquity, those who declare that no one surpassed him in his command of tragic effects, at the same time point out his shortcomings in the general management of his subjects; and they do not hesitate to criticise the "economy" of his dramas.[1] We are not able to put the justice of this reproach to complete proof, since we lack fifty tragedies which these critics used to read; his extant plays, nevertheless, may suffice to enlighten us. As the action is the important element in the construction of a drama, it is the action that we must now study in Euripides' plays, not in all its details nor in each of his tragedies, but only so far as it may serve to characterize his art and to distinguish it from that of his rivals.

If we compare the action of the dramas of Euripides with that in Aeschylus, we find a striking difference at the very outset: in the tragedies of Aeschylus the story is simple and includes only a small number of occurrences; in those of Euripides the story is complex and more or less crowded with events or incidents. This observation does not, it is true, apply to all our poet's dramas. What, for example, could be simpler than the story of the *Children of Heracles*, in which the point at issue is merely whether or not the suppliants whom Athens has undertaken to protect will be surrendered to their enemies, and in which the crisis of the action is a battle, its issue a victory that assures the safety of the children of Heracles and the death of Eurystheus, their persecutor? But the tragedy of the *Children of Heracles*, like the *Suppliants*, which has such a strong resemblance to it, is an exception which we may leave out of account when we state that Euripides very often delighted in dealing with complicated themes. A few of his lost tragedies will serve to afford us the most striking examples of this.

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xiii, p. 1453 a, 29, Vahlen: *εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὖ οἰκονομεῖ.*

A play performed in 438, at the same time as the *Alcestis*, the *Alcmaeon in Psophis*, shows that it was not at the close of his career and from necessity that Euripides abandoned simple subjects. Alcmaeon, like Orestes, was a son who slew his mother to avenge his father, and whose soul from that day was troubled.[1] Pursued by the Furies, he went to Psophis, in Arcadia, to the home of king Phegeus, who purified him of the murder that he had committed and gave him his daughter in marriage. Alcmaeon presented the necklace of his mother Eriphyle to his young wife, with whom he hoped at last to have found rest. But the gods were not yet appeased. It was not long before Alcmaeon was again afflicted with his trouble, and the Arcadian country, in which he had taken refuge, was blighted with barrenness on his account. The Pythia was consulted, and replied that the murderer must leave Arcadia, and that the pursuit of the avenging Furies would cease only when he had settled in a land that had recently emerged from the waters. Alcmaeon, after long wanderings, at length reached the alluvial deposits formed by the mouths of the Achelous, where he settled and married the daughter of the river. She declared to her husband that she would not live with him unless he gave her the necklace of Eriphyle. To gratify the whim of his new wife, Alcmaeon set out to recover the present he had given to his first wife. He returned to Psophis and falsely told the king that Apollo promised him restoration to health on condition that Eriphyle's necklace be dedicated in the sanctuary at Delphi. Phegeus put trust in his words and gave him the necklace. But Alcmaeon was betrayed by a slave, who revealed his real purpose to the king; presently he fell into an ambush prepared for him by the sons of Phegeus, and there met his end.[2] Such was the story of the *Alcmaeon in Psophis*. What an abundance of adventures! How far we are from the simple, almost elementary action of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus!

The story of *Melanippe Bound* was even more replete with events: it was a veritable romance.

This was a sequel to the story of *Melanippe the Philosopher*, which we have already analyzed.[3] The aged king Aeolus had had

[1] Tatian (*Orat. ad. Graec.* 24, p. 100), who mentions Euripides.

[2] Apollod. iii, 7, 5. Pausan. vii, 24, 8–10. Hyginus' account (*Fab.* 73) contains merely the events which precede the plot of the drama.

[3] See p. 158.

his daughter's eyes put out and had locked her up, as a punishment for the sin she had committed. At the same time he had taken her children away from her and had given orders that they should be exposed in the country, where they would become the prey of wild animals. But Poseidon's sons escaped the dangers that threatened them: they were suckled by a cow and sheltered by shepherds. Some time after this, a queen named Theano, whose husband Metapontus wished to put her away because she had no children, had the twins brought to her. She proclaimed that they were her own, and brought them up, but subsequently she herself became the mother of two children. When they were grown, she did not wish that the royal heritage should be assured to strangers, to the detriment of her own sons. One day, therefore, she revealed to the latter that the boys with whom they had been reared were not their brothers, and enjoined upon them to get rid of the others by killing them when on a hunting expedition. A struggle ensued between Theano's sons and the sons of Melanippe; but the latter were victorious. They struck their adversaries a mortal blow and their bodies were brought back to the palace.[1] When she saw them, Theano, in despair, thrust a hunting-knife into her own heart. Meanwhile the two victors, in order to escape the consequences of their murderous deed, sought refuge with the shepherds who had previously given them shelter. There, the god Poseidon appeared to them, revealed to them that they were his sons and informed them of their mother's fate. Upon learning this, the youths hastened to free Melanippe, whom they avenged by slaying Aeolus; they then conducted their mother — who, thanks to Poseidon, had recovered her eyesight — to king Metapontus, to whom they revealed Theano's perfidy. The king married Melanippe and adopted her sons. — This narrative, in the form in which Hyginus[2] has handed it down to us, may not correspond in every particular with the facts portrayed in Euripides' tragedy; nevertheless a gross error, made by the copyists in the very title of the play,[3] vouches for the fact that it was certainly *Melanippe Bound* which Hyginus intended to analyze.

[1] The account of this fight, given by a messenger, is found in part in the papyrus fragment published by Blass in 1880, of which we have already spoken (fragm. 495, Nauck).

[2] *Fab.* 186.

[3] We have pointed out this error, p. 149, note 1.

Thus we know through him at least the sequence of the events of the play, if not its plot. We have seen that these events were anything but simple.

If necessary, other lost tragedies, the *Antiope*, the *Protesilaus*, and above all the *Polyidus*, would furnish examples of similar complications. But we must be on our guard against assuming that Euripides was the only one of the three great tragic poets who treated subjects of this kind. If we limit ourselves to the seven extant tragedies of Sophocles, we shall, of course, find nothing of this sort; but can we maintain that seven tragedies, out of a hundred that the poet wrote, give us a complete idea of his plays? Were all the subjects of these plays better known, there would be more than one surprise in store. We experience a surprise of this kind when we learn that Sophocles, as well as Euripides, made use of the story of Polyidus.

Polyidus—as his name shows—was a soothsayer of great sagacity. Young Glaucus, son of Minos, was one day playing ball,—or was chasing a fly in the country,—and while running fell into a great jar filled with honey. His parents, when he failed to return, made search for him everywhere, but did not find him. Apollo, whom they consulted, said to them: "A monstrous creature has been brought forth in your house: he who shall explain this prodigy will restore your child to you." The monster was a calf of three colors,—or that changed its color three times a day. Great excitement ensued in the house. The entire tribe of soothsayers was called together; but the cleverest of them were puzzled. Polyidus extricated himself from the difficulty by explaining that this monster was like the fruit of the mulberry, which is first white, then turns red, and finally becomes black when ripe. Minos, astonished by such intelligence, declared to Polyidus that, according to the god's oracle, he was the man who must find the child; accordingly the soothsayer went afield. Presently he saw an owl perched on a great jar, from which it was driving the bees.[1] He understood, approached the jar, and took from it the dead child and brought it back to its father. But this discovery did not

[1] The detail of the owl that is the means of discovering Glaucus' body is attested by Aelian (*Hist. Anim.* v, 2) as occurring in Euripides; that of the three-colored calf by the scholiast of Aristides (p. 728).

satisfy Minos, who demanded that the soothsayer should restore his son to life. When the latter declared that this was an impossibility, Minos gave him the alternative of dying or of resuscitating his child; he had him shut up with the corpse, giving him a sword. Hereon a snake came out of a hole and glided close by the child; Polyidus used the sword to kill the creature. A second snake appeared, and seeing its comrade was dead, brought a miraculous herb, the touch of which restored it to life. Polyidus promptly applied the same herb to the body of Glaucus, who forthwith returned to life. A passer-by heard the two prisoners call and informed Minos, who had the prison opened and was beside himself with joy at seeing his son again. Polyidus was sent back to his own country laden with gifts.[1]

Here we have an extraordinary tale, full of wonderful incidents, and yet it tempted Sophocles[2] as well as Euripides. Who, then, can maintain that the latter introduced stories of a romantic character into the Athenian theatre? So fragmentary is our knowledge of the considerable part of Sophocles' dramas which are now lost that we can hardly venture to say that Euripides was the first to occupy himself with subjects such as we have just analyzed.

As the incidents which fill Euripides' tragedies are usually many and varied, we should not feel surprise if we frequently find that his plays have a complex plot (πεπλεγμένη), in other words, following Aristotle's definition, that their action turns on a reversal of fortune, or recognition, or both.[3] Recognition (ἀναγνώρισις) is one of the most frequent dramatic devices of the Athenian tragic writers—and they borrowed it from the epics. An example is found even in the *Choephori*, in which Aeschylus paid no regard to probability. His successors were to show greater cleverness in the use of an invention which he was doubtless the first to employ. The recognition in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* was famous in antiquity; Aristotle cites it as a model.[4] About those in Sophocles' *Tereus* and *Tyro* we know little. We learn merely that in the first of these

[1] Apollod. iii, 3, 1. Hyginus, *Fab.* 136. Both mythographers agree in this story.

[2] Sophocles' play had also the title *The Soothsayers*. But fragments 358 and 359 (Nauck) show clearly that in it the poet dealt with the story of Polyidus.

[3] Arist. *Poet.* x, 2, p. 1452 a, 17, Vahlen.

[4] Arist. *Poet.* xvi, 9, p. 1455 a, 18.

tragedies the sign of recognition was the "voice of the shuttle," that is, the fabric on which Philomela had embroidered the letters which composed the message she sent to her sister Procne.[1] In the second tragedy, Pelias and Neleus, sons of Poseidon, were recognized by their mother by means of the "little bark" in which at the time of their birth they had been exposed on the shores of the river Enipeus.[2]

Euripides must have made a freer use than Sophocles of a dramatic device which aroused interest to its highest pitch, and which, usually by introducing a sudden change of fortune, had the effect of giving the plot more action. In his lost dramas there were several scenes of recognition. We have already had occasion to point out that of Theseus by his father Aegeus, that of Cresphontes by Merope, and that of Amphion and Zethus by their mother Antiope. A drama that was not performed until after the poet's death,[3] the *Alcmaeon in Corinth*, gives evidence that to the last he sought after the sort of effect which arises from scenes of recognition. Alcmaeon, at the time of his madness, had had by Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, two children, called Amphilochus and Tisiphone. He took them to Corinth and confided them to king Creon to be reared. As the young girl grew up she became wonderfully beautiful, and her beauty roused the jealousy of the king's wife. In order to get Tisiphone out of the way, the queen had her sold into slavery. It happened that Alcmaeon bought her, without suspecting that she was his daughter. Later the hero arrived at Corinth to claim his children, but found only his son. He was informed, however, of what had happened, and presently —just how we do not know—he recognized his daughter in his young slave.[4]

Again in the *Alexander*[5] a recognition constituted the solution

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xvi, p. 1454 b, 36.

[2] Arist. *Poet.* xvi, p. 1454 b, 25.

[3] Schol. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 67.

[4] Apollodorus (iii, 7, 7), who gives a résumé, as he tells us, of Euripides' tragedy. He is our only source of information about this story. Was it borrowed from the cyclic poem *Alcmaeonis?* This is doubtful, for Apollodorus, who elsewhere (i, 8, 5) quotes the author of the *Alcmaeonis*, here cites only Euripides. We cannot, however, conclude that the story was invented by the poet.

[5] The same subject had been treated by Sophocles, but nothing is known about the way in which he dealt with it. Of Sophocles' *Alexander* only two complete verses and a few words remain.

of the plot. Hecuba was said to have dreamt one day that she gave birth to a burning torch from which serpents darted forth. The soothsayers who were consulted decided that any sons born of Hecuba must be killed. When Paris (Alexander) was born, he was sent away to death. But the guards who were to kill him were overcome by pity and merely exposed the child, who was subsequently found and brought up by shepherds. One day, many years afterward, attendants came from the court of Priam to fetch from these shepherds a bullock destined for a prize in the funeral games. This bullock was the pet of young Paris, who, for love of the creature, entered the arena and there defeated all his rivals, even his brothers. Deïphobus, exasperated by the result of the contest, rushed with naked sword upon Paris, who sought refuge at the altar of Zeus Herceus. Deïphobus was about to fall upon him, when the prophetess Cassandra declared that this youth was his brother. Thereupon Priam recognized Paris and received him in his palace.[1]

These abstracts inform us of the existence of scenes of recognition in several of Euripides' tragedies; they do not instruct us about the manner in which the recognition was brought about. Fortunately three extant tragedies, the *Electra*, *Ion* and *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, enable us to judge the poet's skill in the use of this device, which was not new to the stage.

When Euripides' *Electra* was performed, the Athenian audience had not forgotten the recognition in the *Choephori:* they would inevitably institute a comparison of the similar scenes in the two dramas. Euripides boldly anticipated this comparison; he himself called the attention of the spectators to it. He did this not in deference, in order to do homage to his predecessor, but rather in malice, in order to criticise him. Forgetting that he was a writer of tragedy, he became for the moment a writer of comedy and parodied the Aeschylean scene which he was obliged to duplicate. It will be remembered that in the *Choephori* the recognition is brought about by several means: the lock of hair which Orestes

[1] Hyginus (*Fab.* 91), who, it should be observed, does not mention Euripides. We do not think, as does von Wilamowitz (*Anal. Eurip.* p. 148), that fragment 58 (Nauck) contradicts the passage in Hyginus about Cassandra's prophecy. Cf. Welcker's restoration, *Griech. Trag.* vol. ii, p. 471.

places on Agamemnon's tomb, his footprints, the garment he wears. These are the things Euripides ridicules. He supposes that an old man who watched over Orestes' infancy goes in search of Electra. In passing near Agamemnon's tomb this old man has seen traces of a recent sacrifice, and has found a lock of hair which he shows to Electra and asks her whether on comparing it with her own she does not recognize the locks of Orestes. Electra thinks this rather unreasonable:

> "Then, how should tress be matched with tress of hair—
> That, a young noble's trained in athlete-strife,
> This, woman-like, comb-sleeked? It cannot be.
> Sooth, many shouldst thou find of hair like-hued,
> Though of the same blood, ancient, never born."

The old man replies:

> "Set in his sandal's print thy tread, and mark
> If that foot's measure answer, child, to thine."

And Electra answers:

> "How on a stony plain should there be made
> Impress of feet? Yea, if such print be there,
> Brother's and sister's foot should never match—
> A man's and woman's; greater is the male."

When the old man insists, and declares that if Orestes should return, Electra would recognize the garment she once wove for him, she raises a new objection, well calculated to amuse the public at Aeschylus' expense:

> "Yea, had I woven vests
> How should that lad the same cloak wear to-day
> Except, as waxed the body, vestures grew?"[1]

These criticisms are certainly out of place in a tragedy; but they are put in rather a pointed way, and it must be conceded that they are just. It is no reflection on Aeschylus to say that he did not pay sufficient attention to probability in the recognition scene of his *Choephori*.

As the means that Aeschylus used by which Electra was to recognize Orestes were not good, Euripides was forced to invent something better. In his tragedy, it is this same old man whose

[1] *Electra*, 527–544.

curious notions Electra has discouraged that recognizes Orestes, whom he long ago saved from death. He recognizes him less by his features, which of necessity are much changed, than by the scar along his brow of a wound Orestes got long ago in childhood. But the happy discovery is not made suddenly. The old man, whose memory grows clear only by degrees, begins by walking round the youth, by examining him with a curious and persistent attention which annoys him, and, when he is sure that he is not mistaken, he tries to prepare Electra for the surprise she is about to experience:

"Daughter Electra — princess! — pray the gods."

When she asks for an explanation, he adds:

"To win the precious treasure God reveals!"

Electra is perplexed and still fails to understand. The old man insists:

"Look on him now, child,—on thy best-beloved!"

The young girl fears that the old servant is out of his mind, but at length he lets escape the words which the spectator is waiting for: "Behold Orestes, Agamemnon's son," and he removes the last trace of Electra's incredulity by calling her attention to the scar on her brother's brow.[1]—This kind of recognition was better than that of the *Choephori;* but this fact was but a meagre satisfaction to Euripides, who was condemned in all the remainder of his play to recall, without being able to equal,[2] the powerful effects of Aeschylus.

In the *Ion* the recognition is brought about more slowly, because the surprise which it is to occasion is to be much more intense. In the *Electra* the sister has expected and longed for her brother, and his return fills her with even more joy than wonder. But Creusa, upon arriving at Delphi, has no hope whatever of again seeing her son. Moreover this son and his mother, who do not know each other, are kept almost to the end of the play in very violent antagonism to one another. Creusa has attempted to poison Ion; Ion, in turn, would slay Creusa. Those who are to be reconciled are more than enemies; they have each attempted the

[1] *Electra*, 563–574.

[2] Euripides makes no allusion to Sophocles. Perhaps Sophocles' *Electra*, whose date is absolutely unknown, had not yet been performed.

other's life and yet they must be brought to throw themselves into one another's arms. Were the proofs of the bond that unites them offered too quickly, the distrust and hatred which they mutually feel would make them incredulous. It is necessary, then, that the recognition be managed with skill. The poet has not failed to accomplish this. At the moment when Ion is about to tear Creusa from the altar at which she has taken refuge, the Pythia appears on the scene and stops him. She bears in her arms a basket, partially enveloped in a wrapping which conceals its contents, the swaddling-clothes of a child. This is the basket in which Ion was found on the threshold of the temple at Delphi, and these clothes were then about him. The youth is moved when he receives from the Pythia's hands the object which reveals to him a part of the secret of his birth; the sight of it recalls his neglected infancy, devoid of caresses. At the same time he laments for his unknown mother in verses that express very delicate feeling. Presently he opens the basket. Creusa utters a cry of dismay: she has recognized the cradle in which long ago she placed Apollo's son in the grotto of Cecrops. She leaves the god's altar hurriedly, and rushes towards the cradle and Ion, who thinks she is mad. "Thou art my son," she cries. But Ion, who has reason for being on his guard, does not allow himself to be convinced so quickly; he must have proofs, and he must have several. He asks Creusa:

"Void is this ark, or somewhat does it hide?

CREUSA

Yea, that which wrapped thee when I cast thee forth.

ION

Speak out and name them ere thine eyes behold."

Creusa is obliged to enumerate all the contents of the basket: an unfinished piece of embroidery, worked in her girlhood, on which a Gorgon's head is pictured; two snakes of gold such as are placed round the neck of a new-born child; a wreath of olive leaves, which must have remained green, gathered on the Acropolis from the tree of Pallas. Ion, who sees that Creusa has true knowledge of the facts, is obliged to yield to such evidence, and at last gives expression to his joy, which is exceeded only by that of his mother.[1]

[1] *Ion*, 1320–1449.

The recognition in the *Ion* is of that kind which is brought about by means of "invented tokens" (πεποιημένα σημεῖα), that is, material objects whose special nature is the invention of the poet. This sort of recognition, which was doubtless the commonest, is regarded as inferior by Aristotle, who on the other hand gives the highest place to the kind "which arises from the incidents themselves, where the startling effect is produced by probable means." The example which he cites from Euripides' dramas is taken from the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*.[1]

There is nothing improbable in the fact that Iphigeneia should take interest in the fate of prisoners who are Greeks, and that, upon learning that they come from Mycenae, she should ask them questions about her people. Not less natural is the proposal she subsequently makes to them: she promises to save the life of one of the youths if he will undertake the delivery of a message she desires to send to Argos. This message is to be the means of recognition, and we know with how much skill it is employed. When Iphigeneia returns to the stage, with the tablets in her hand, she makes Pylades—whom his friend would not allow to die in his stead—swear to deliver her letter, not to Orestes, but, rather vaguely, "to her friends." Had Iphigeneia pronounced the name of her brother, that alone would not have sufficed to effect an immediate recognition. The two youths would have been greatly astonished, but they would not at once have understood that they had Iphigeneia before them, since they think she is dead, sacrificed at Aulis. Therefore it was essential that Iphigeneia should disclose her own name at the same time that she mentioned that of Orestes and also that she should make explanations. The poet provided for this necessity as follows. Pylades, after having sworn to carry out his mission, remarks that a mischance may overtake his vessel, and that the letter would then disappear in the waves, even though he himself might escape shipwreck. Iphigeneia, struck by the justness of this reflection, decides to forestall all possible mishaps by giving Pylades the purport of her message orally:

"Say to Orestes, Agamemnon's son—
'This Iphigeneia, slain in Aulis, sends,

[1] Arist. *Poet.* xvi, 9, p. 1455 a, 16–20, Vahlen.

> Who liveth, yet for those at home lives not— . . .
> Bear me to Argos, brother, ere I die:
> From this wild land, these sacrifices, save,
> Wherein mine office is to slay the stranger;— . . .
> Else to thine house will I become a curse,
> Orestes!'"

These words are twice interrupted by Orestes' exclamations of astonishment—he cannot believe what he hears. Iphigeneia insists, and desires Pylades, upon his return to Argos, to explain to his friend how in Aulis the goddess Artemis had saved her from being sacrificed by substituting a hind, and had subsequently transported her to the Taurian land. There is no longer any possibility of doubt. Pylades turns to his friend:

> "This tablet, lo, to thee I bear, and give,
> Orestes, from thy sister, yonder maid."[1]

Iphigeneia has been recognized by Orestes; Orestes must now be acknowledged by Iphigeneia, but the words just spoken by Pylades do not suffice. This second part of the scene is not so satisfactory to Aristotle as the first part. And why? "Because," he says, "Orestes makes himself known by speaking himself, and by saying what the poet, not what the plot requires."[2] Orestes tries to convince his sister by appealing to her memory, by giving her certain exact details of his past life and of their father's home, details which are the creations of the poet's imagination. He reminds her of an embroidery on which the quarrel of Atreus and Thyestes was pictured, of the purifying water brought by Clytemnestra from Argos to Aulis, of the lock of hair which Iphigeneia had sent to her mother before the sacrifice, and finally of Pelops' spear which had been hidden in the young girl's chamber.[3] It is not much to Euripides' credit to have invented all these details. It is for this reason that Aristotle prefers the first recognition, which arises from the story itself and is brought about by the natural course of events.

[1] *Iphig. in Taur.* 769–792.

[2] Arist. *Poet.* xvi, 5, p. 1454 b, 34, Vahlen.

[3] *Iphig. in Taur.* 811–826.

II

DOUBLE PLOTS

HECUBA — HERACLES — DAUGHTERS OF TROY THE PHOENICIAN MAIDENS

Euripides, who multiplies incidents in the course of a single action, attempted something bolder, an invention that is without parallel in the extant plays of Aeschylus or Sophocles: he sometimes combines two actions in a single drama. This fact is of sufficient importance to justify its consideration and the attempt to discover its reasons.

The *Hecuba*—to begin with the oldest play of this kind—is incontestably a tragedy in two parts. The first of these, which afforded Sophocles matter sufficient for an entire drama,[1] ends with the death of Polyxena, who is sacrificed by the Greeks to the shades of Achilles. The subject of the second is the vengeance wreaked by Hecuba on the slayer of her son Polydorus. These two parts are held together by the thinnest possible thread. An old slave woman, charged with fetching water for the ablutions at Polyxena's funeral, sees the body of Polydorus floating near the shore and brings it to her mistress: this is the way in which the tragedy, which appeared to have ended, begins again. It is therefore beyond question that the play lacks unity of action. Unity—if we seek it—exists only in the chief character, in Hecuba, who has run the whole gamut of human sorrows and of whom the poet desired to make a veritable *mater dolorosa*. A single catastrophe was not enough for this purpose; her woes would not have been complete. There was need of a second catastrophe: as the prologue indicates,[2] on one and the same day she is to behold the dead bodies of both her children. This twofold plot, moreover, results in a novel development of Hecuba's character. To the crushed and despairing mother, who, after the immolation of her daughter, "remains lying on the ground, outstretched upon her back and muffled in her robes,"[3] succeeds a woman whom her second bereavement pushes to ex-

[1] The tragedy *Polyxena* (schol. Eurip. *Hecuba*, 1), of which there remain only a small number of short fragments (Nauck, 479–485).

[2] *Hecuba*, 45, 46.

[3] *Hecuba*, 486, 487.

tremities, who is excited by a desire for revenge and thirsts for blood. Hecuba, luring Polymestor into a pitfall, in order to put out his eyes and slay his children, is more than a mother who seeks revenge: she is already "that dog with fire-red eyes"[1] into which tradition said she was to be changed after her death.[2] The immediate cause of Hecuba's rage is no doubt Polymestor's despicable betrayal, but it breaks out in such a terrible way only because it has already been seething within her. The death of Polyxena accounts for the atrociousness of Hecuba's revenge. Since she cannot punish the Greeks who have torn her daughter from her, she takes vengeance on Polymestor, at a single stroke, for both son and daughter. This perhaps explains why the two plots were combined in the same play.

The *Heracles* also is supposed to have a double plot. But the poet's purpose would seem to be even more manifest here than in the *Hecuba*. The murder of the tyrant Lycus, which appears to terminate a first plot, is not an ending. It certainly is satisfactory to see this hateful character disappear and his victims escape him. But as soon as Heracles arrives, we feel that it is all over with Lycus, who is no longer of any consequence: he is promptly forgotten and our thoughts are centred on the hero and his family. Accordingly, that which engages our attention during almost the entire play is the fate of this family, first threatened with death, then saved by the unexpected intervention of its head, and finally destroyed by him in an access of raging insanity. And after the catastrophe, how can we help being interested in the fate of the survivor, the unwitting murderer Heracles,—the mighty figure, once glorious, now miserable, that dominates the whole play? He forms the binding link of the drama; but it is correct to say that it is cut in two, as it were, by a violent peripetia. Evidently Euripides sought for the effect of contrast. At the very moment when Heracles returns in triumph, when he is the savior of his family and the liberator of his people, we see him suddenly attacked by the most terrible affliction that can befall a human being; and it is while in this state that he is led to commit the most atrocious deeds. Had Heracles appeared on the scene already afflicted, his mind dis-

[1] *Hecuba*, 1265.

[2] Dio Chrysost. *Orat.* xxiii, vol. ii, p. 29, Reiske. Cic. *Tuscul.* iii, 26.

traught, letting us divine everything and making us fear the worst, he would have been less tragic than this hero who is smitten by an unexpected blow in the height of his glory,—than this strong man who is conquered in the fulness of his strength. Furthermore —another contrast—can we imagine a more affecting scene than that when Heracles awakens, when he regains possession of himself, and sees what he has done? The moral agony of this man, formerly so strong in every trial, now abased, ashamed, despairing and longing for death, awakens a pity of another kind than that roused by the fate of his victims, but a pity that is not less profound. In spite, then, of appearances, there does exist in this tragedy a unity of a high order. The first part of the plot, which is of minor consequence, brings into startling relief the second, which is of supreme importance.

The form of the *Daughters of Troy* harmonizes even less with the general character of the dramas of this period. In it Euripides appears to return to the art of Aeschylus in placing before our eyes not a plot that advances, but, so to say, a situation without action, whose varying successive aspects we merely behold with increasing emotion. This is the situation of the women of Priam's family on the day after the capture of Troy, and their misfortune is unfolded to the eye of the spectator in a series of tableaux. Only one character is always on the stage, Hecuba, upon whom all the suffering of the drama falls, and who sees pass in turn before her, to be separated from her forever, all that remain of her family: first her daughter Cassandra, destined to Agamemnon's bed, who comes from the tent of the captive women, torch in hand, intoning in her delirium the hymeneal chant, prophesying the disasters that await the Greeks and the overthrow of the house of the Atridae; then Andromache, who arrives with Astyanax in her arms, to inform Hecuba of the recent death of Polyxena, sacrificed on the tomb of Achilles; then the herald Talthybius, who comes to tell Andromache that Hector's son is condemned to death by the Greeks, and takes the child away from her; then again—after an interval devoted by the poet to the expression by the chorus of grief which immediately gives place to a demand for vengeance —Menelaus, desiring to take back Helen, who walks among the Trojan captives and whose death Hecuba demands urgently and

passionately; and finally the dead body of Astyanax, which is brought in upon his father's shield and to which his grandmother, after a most touching farewell, gives burial, while Troy is in flames. This is the end. The burning city, crashing to its fall, illumines the burial of Priam's last descendant, and Hecuba, who is about to depart, has nothing left to her. Where do we find greater unity than in a subject like this? A nation annihilated, a royal family fallen and swept away, whom its conquerors destroy by slaughter and enslavement. Here there are not several plots, but the various parts of a single situation which succeed one another without close connection. Of what consequence is it that the play is devoid of intrigue, that it lacks sudden changes, that it is of a simple and almost elementary construction, if only it awaken profound pity[1] for Hecuba and for the vanquished, who in one day have lost all?

The drama of the *Daughters of Troy* consists of a succession of episodes, but these as a whole produce a single impression. The *Phoenician Maidens*, which is constructed on different lines, has a plot sufficiently complicated to have occasioned the belief that it consists of "practically two parallel tragedies."[2] It is obvious that in the *Phoenician Maidens* interest is divided. No doubt it attaches chiefly to the rivalry of Eteocles and Polyneices, which follows its fatal course, despite Iocasta's efforts; but morally it attaches also, although in a subordinate way, to the city of Thebes. Creon's son offers to die, not for his king Eteocles, but for the salvation of Thebes, his country. When the action ends, the dénouement is complex: Thebes survives and triumphs; the sons of Oedipus have died, and after them Iocasta. We hear a song of joy intoned, and again the sound of lamentation; the two impressions are mingled in the tragedy, just as they are mingled in an actual victory. But we do not share these impressions equally; one is much stronger than the other. At the end of the play the victory of Thebes takes second place; the first is held by the catastrophe which befalls the family of Oedipus. The drama of the *Phoenician Maidens* thus

[1] Pity was the chief impression, but a feeling of indignation at the cruelty of the victors must have been mingled with it. This tragedy contained nothing to exalt Greek pride, as did the *Persians* of Aeschylus.

[2] Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. iii, p. 301.

rouses a primary and essential interest, to which is added a secondary interest that at times rises above the former, but in the end remains subordinate. There are not, as in the *Hecuba*, two plots of equal importance that follow one upon the other, but two plots of unequal importance, which mingle and cross, only to end in two dénouements, of which the one through its tragic effects dominates and almost obliterates the other. Thus the *Phoenician Maidens* is a composition of a special kind, and it would indeed be a very narrow interpretation of Aristotle to blame Euripides for such a work, in which, it is true, we do not find that kind of unity to which we are accustomed, but which has, without confusion or disorder, the movement, the variety and the complexity of life.

What shall we think of these infractions of what appears to be one of the laws of Greek tragedy,—unity of action? Certain critics have asked whether Euripides in writing plays of this sort toward the end of his life was imitating a vicious example, or through bad taste himself took the initiative "in including within the limits of a single tragedy the material of an entire trilogy."[1] This double hypothesis contains more than one inaccuracy. In the first place the plays under discussion do not all belong to the same period, nor to the last years of the poet's life: the *Hecuba* was performed about 424,[2] the *Heracles* only a few years later; and the assumption that at this period other tragic writers than Sophocles and Euripides had composed a sufficient number of plays with complex plots to make this style seductive and irresistible is a purely gratuitous assumption. In the second place, in which of the tragedies of Euripides that we have discussed above do we find "the material of a trilogy"? Certainly not in the *Phoenician Maidens* nor in the *Daughters of Troy:* only the *Hecuba* and the *Heracles* have two successive plots that, amplified and developed, might have sufficed for two distinct dramas; nowhere is there matter for three. It is therefore hard to justify any attempt to establish a relation between the three-drama system of the ancient Greek theatre and those of Euripides' tragedies which seem to lack

[1] G. Hermann, preface to his edition of the *Phoenician Maidens*, p. xviii.

[2] It was long ago observed (Zirndorfer, *Chron. Fab. Eurip.* 38) that verses 455–465 of the *Hecuba* allude to the reëstablishment of the festival of Delos, which took place at the close of the winter of the year 425 (Thucyd. iii, 104).

unity.[1] Is it not more probable that the poet had no intention of reviving the custom of writing trilogies, which had fallen into disuse, but on the contrary, in occasionally grouping two plots of unequal importance under the unity of a principal character, meant to get new effects? And is this not a further proof of the originality of his mind and of the pains he took to open a way in the domain of tragic art which should be his own?

III

EURIPIDES AS A CRITIC OF AESCHYLUS
COMPARISON OF THE PLAYS IN WHICH BOTH POETS DEALT WITH THE SAME SUBJECTS

The preceding observations on the double plot of the *Phoenician Maidens* suggest the comparison of Euripides with Aeschylus. The former has several times—to be exact, in thirteen tragedies[2]—dealt with the same subjects as his predecessor. Three of these thirteen tragedies are extant of each poet, and furnish the means for an instructive comparison. By comparative study of the *Phoenician Maidens* and the *Seven against Thebes*, of the *Electra* and the *Choephori*, of the *Orestes* and the *Eumenides*, we cannot fail to apprehend more clearly the methods peculiar to the art of a poet who frequently and of deliberate purpose placed himself under the necessity of doing otherwise than his predecessor had done.

Did he claim to do better? We should think so, to judge by the attacks he casually makes upon him. Such intrusion of literary satire into tragedy as we have already pointed out is certainly a curious and unexpected thing. But should it be made a matter of reproach to a poet who saw himself violently attacked, and who

[1] Patin, *Tragiques grecs*[7], vol. iii, p. 333. The same critic, nevertheless, elsewhere (p. 298) correctly calls attention to the fact that "when Euripides combines in the same play various episodes of a long story which before his time were separate, this is not simply an unconsidered infraction of that law of unity under which his Muse was born and whose yoke she knew how to bear, but much rather a *conscious striving for another kind of unity*."

[2] These tragedies in alphabetical order are: The *Bacchanals* (*Pentheus* by Aeschylus), *Electra* (the *Choephori*), the *Children of Heracles*, *Ixion*, *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, *Oedipus*, *Orestes* (the *Eumenides*), *Palamedes*, *Telephus*, *Hypsipyle* (*Nemea*), *Phaethon* (the *Heliades*), *Philoctetes*, the *Phoenician Women* (*Seven against Thebes*).

had no other means of defending himself than by the speeches of his *dramatis personae*, if he made use of the sole means he had at his disposal? Long before the time of the *Frogs*, Aeschylus and Euripides had been placed in the scales, and just as in France Racine had for a long time to struggle against the ill will of the obstinate admirers of Corneille, in the same way, no doubt, there were many in Athens besides Aristophanes for whom the wonders of Aeschylus' dramas obscured the merits of those of Euripides, whose faults only—and they were real faults—they were ready to perceive. Unjustly underrated, invidiously depreciated, how could Euripides resist the temptation to retort and the wicked pleasure of scoffing on occasion at the older poet who was extolled at his expense?[1] In his *Electra* he made fun of the recognition scene in the *Choephori;* in his *Phoenician Maidens* he ridicules the improbabilities of the *Seven against Thebes.*

This was not the first time that he had attacked the *Seven*, for one of the characters in the *Suppliants* had incidentally criticised it. When the bodies of the Argive leaders are brought upon the stage, amid the groans and the sobs of their mothers, Theseus approaches and desires Adrastus to declare boldly what kind of men these heroes were during their lifetime, these men whose valor deserves to be set up as an example to the youth of Athens. But he adds:

> "One question, meet for laughter, I ask not—
> Whom each of these encountered in the strife,
> Or from what foeman's spear received his wound.
> I could not ask such vanity as this,
> Nor them believe whose impudence would tell.
> For scarce a man can see what see he must,
> What time he standeth foot to foot with foes."[2]

[1] Euripides, who does not deal gently with Aeschylus, does not appear to have attacked Sophocles. At least we are not impressed by the contradiction which some critics believe they see between a maxim in Sophocles' *Antigone* (563, 564) and another maxim in Euripides' *Antigone* (fragm. 165, Nauck); and granted that this is an actual contradiction, it may not have been intentional. It is more probable that in his *Melanippe Bound* (fragm. 492) the poet attacked the comic poets, those men "who make a profitable business of laughter," against whom he had so much cause for complaint.

[2] *Suppl.* 846–856, omitting 849–852, which we do not translate because they are an interpolation.

The satirical allusion is even more precise in a passage of the *Phoenician Maidens*. A prisoner has arrived from the enemy's camp with the news that the Argive army is about to surround Thebes. Eteocles takes counsel with Creon on the situation and finally adopts his prudent advice. He decides not to make a sally with the Theban army, but to remain on the defensive. He says:

> "I 'll plant chiefs, as thou biddest at the gates,
> Champion for champion, ranged against the foe.
> To tell each o'er, were costly waste of time,
> When foes be camped beneath our very walls."[1]

The poet who wastes time in such an enumeration is Aeschylus, in a celebrated scene of the *Seven against Thebes*,—a scene that is unquestionably too long and is certainly disproportionate.[2] In this scene Eteocles and a scout waste moments precious for action in descriptions which are more epic than dramatic, while the cries of the enemy resound at the gates of Thebes. Euripides was not mistaken in his criticism: he attacks one of the vulnerable points in the tragedy of the *Seven against Thebes*. But though he avoided the improbabilities which he points out in Aeschylus and constructed his play differently, has he succeeded in writing as powerful a work? This is a question which we must investigate.

The subject of the *Phoenician Maidens* is the same as that of the *Seven against Thebes;* but how little resemblance there is between these two dramas! The first thing that strikes the eye is a wholly external difference, but one that indicates far-reaching changes in the internal economy of the drama: Euripides' play is much longer than that of Aeschylus.[3] This is due to the fact that an interval of about sixty years elapsed between the plays, and that during this interval a new taste had developed. The Athenian audience, having witnessed the performance of so many tragedies, mediocre and excellent, had become exacting and was no longer satisfied with the rather unadorned simplicity of Aeschylus. A drama like that of the *Seven against Thebes*, consisting of only a thousand verses, of which more than one third were sung by the

[1] *Phœn. Maid.* 749–752.

[2] It is extended to nearly three hundred verses, while the entire play consists of ten hundred and seventy-eight.

[3] It has about seven hundred verses more.

chorus, would at the end of the century have appeared to be too short.[1] When Euripides took up the same subject, he was obliged to amplify the action, and not only to amplify it but also to provide for the loss occasioned by reducing the songs of the chorus. Moreover, as the action, both in itself and as Aeschylus had developed it, was extremely simple, Euripides could expand it only by introducing new characters and more complicated incidents.

In the *Phoenician Maidens* there are as many as six characters which we do not find in Aeschylus: Polyneices and Iocasta; Tiresias, Menoeceus and Creon; and Oedipus. Creon plays merely a secondary part and Oedipus appears only at the very end. But the others have a more or less active share in the drama.

Only the dead body of Polyneices is brought upon the stage in the *Seven against Thebes;* in the *Phoenician Maidens* he appears alive. In Aeschylus, the messenger merely reports his threats and describes the emblem on his shield; Euripides presents him to view and portrays his character. Almost at the beginning of the drama, Polyneices, under protection of an armistice, enters the walls of Thebes to parley with Eteocles in an interview which has been arranged for him by his mother Iocasta. By bringing the two brothers face to face in this interview the poet accentuates the contrast between their natures. Eteocles is violent, intractable, dominated by a single passion,—ambition, which he carries to the point of cynicism. Polyneices' spirit is less vigorous than that of his brother. He trembles as he enters the walls of Thebes; but he has justice on his side—he is honest and human, open to tender feeling and to love of family. During the altercation, at a time when he ought to blaze with anger and be possessed solely by a craving for vengeance, he asks to see his father and his sisters. Only when Eteocles has refused all his requests and his patience is exhausted, does he resent his insults and accept the challenge which has been hurled at him. His generous nature shows itself again in his last moments; as he lies dying he declares his pity for his dying brother. Thus the personality of Polyneices is interesting and touching, and it is not difficult to justify the introduction of this character into a plot which without it would have ended too quickly.

[1] According to Suidas (*s. v.* Ἀρίσταρχος), Aristarchus of Tegea, a contemporary of Euripides, was the first to give the drama the length which it was to retain.

His appearance necessitated Iocasta's. Only a mother's authority was strong enough to induce Eteocles to see his brother once more before the decisive struggle. But Euripides had to disregard accepted traditions when he represented Iocasta as alive at the time of the action and shortly taking her own life. In the *Odyssey*,[1] and likewise in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, she hanged herself in despair so soon as she discovered that she was the wife of her son. Only Euripides imagines her alive after the revelation of the terrible secret. He does so because this is necessary to the ordering and action of the complex tragedy which he has conceived. In his drama, Iocasta is a mother who, upon again seeing a son long absent, abandons herself to prolonged expressions of tenderness; who has planned and seeks to effect by every means and argument a reconciliation between the two hostile brothers, and, failing in the attempt, is tortured by grief and anxiety; and who finally, at the news of the single combat, rushes to the field of battle, where she stabs herself to the heart by the side of her sons. This rôle of mother wakens an emotion of a special kind which nothing in the *Seven against Thebes* evokes.

The secondary characters, Creon, Tiresias, Menoeceus, correspond in the *Phoenician Maidens* to the secondary interest roused by the city of Thebes, whose fate the poet wished to separate from that of the two brothers. That Eteocles may know the future held in store by the gods for Thebes, Creon summons the soothsayer Tiresias; to avert the disasters which threaten the country, Tiresias names the human sacrifice which Ares claims; to save that same country, Menoeceus offers up his life. These three rôles are closely connected, and together contribute to the same effect. We may question the utility of producing it, since it complicates the action of the drama; we cannot deny the dramatic interest inherent in the scenes in which these characters appear.

It seems less easy to justify the introduction of Oedipus.[2] The ancient critics who point out the digressions in the *Phoenician Maidens* characterize the scene in which Oedipus goes into exile as a "useless addition."[3] But is this scene, although it is certainly over-long, wholly superfluous? It is true that when we know how

[1] *Odyssey*, xi, 271 *et seq.*

[2] *Phoen. Maid.* 1539 *et seq.*

[3] See the argument of Aristophanes the grammarian which precedes the play.

Eteocles and Polyneices and their mother have died, the tragedy seems finished. But we must remember that it was Oedipus' curse upon his sons which caused their quarrel and their wretched end —that the deaths of Eteocles and Polyneices, and of Iocasta, who did not wish to survive them, is in reality the work of Oedipus. The poet has let Oedipus live so long that he may learn the result of his wrath, and for the same reason at the end of the play he brings him forth, guided by Antigone, from the palace in which he has been confined. The sight of this fatal old man, who before departing to death in exile approaches the dead bodies of his wife and sons, to bid farewell to those whom his imprecation has slain, must have made a great impression on the audience. The catastrophe in the *Phoenician Maidens* was more thrilling because of its intimate connection with Oedipus' destiny.

No one of the characters we have just mentioned appears in Aeschylus. In the *Seven against Thebes* a single person conducts the whole action,—Eteocles; the others do not count. The chorus is there merely to express the terrors of a besieged city and to bring into relief by its woman's fears the virile steadfastness of the king. Antigone and Ismene, who enter after the catastrophe to lament their brothers, are episodic characters. The scout serves merely to give answers to the king, the messenger merely to bring the news of the fatal duel. Eteocles is the only person in the drama that acts. Aeschylus has animated him with furious hatred of his brother, as the situation demanded. When he learns that Polyneices is at the seventh gate, his passion breaks loose: "Bring me," he cries, "my greaves, my spear and my shield!"[1] In vain do the chorus attempt to stop him. Eteocles, hitherto so self-restrained, is beside himself; he feels himself driven on by an irresistible power, —that of Oedipus' malediction,—and he departs. But before this decisive moment he has displayed all the qualities of a king: he is a serious, prudent, deliberate man, who, in the midst of the women's lamentations and of the general anxiety, does not lose his head for a moment, but calmly and collectedly makes all necessary decisions—in a word, he is the true head of the state.

Euripides' Eteocles is altogether different. In his interview with Polyneices he at once boldly displays his odious nature. For a mo-

[1] *Seven against Thebes*, 675, 676, ed. Weil, in Teubner's series.

ment only he gives expression to a feeling which has the semblance of honorable sentiment: "If," he says to his mother, "I am not willing to yield, it is because my brother has come before Thebes with an alien force, and it would be disgraceful for Thebans to be terrified by the threats of Argives."[1] But his actual reason, that upon which he enlarges and insists, is the following: I have the power; I keep it because I desire it—and he impudently declares that he regards his desire to rule of greater consequence than any considerations of justice. Some critics are virtuously indignant at this, in the name of public morality. Eteocles is certainly despicable, but is Euripides wrong in making him so? To him Eteocles is one of the types of ambition. Is it not evident that, in creating this type, the poet has wished to portray this passion, not from the point of view of its possible nobility, of its generous boldness and striking audacity, but from the point of view of its baseness, its lack of scruples, its disregard of right? The sentiment with which Eteocles ends his speech and which sums it up—

> "If wrong may e'er be right, for a throne's sake
> Were wrong most right—"[2]

is revolting, but it is cruelly true. Is it not the formula, more or less openly avowed, of all great ambitious men, of the planners of revolutions in all ages?

But the character of Eteocles, whose master-passion is ambition,—hatred of his brother is merely the result of this ambition,—is not complete. Eteocles rarely gives evidence of the qualities demanded by his rôle. This man who has such a lively desire to remain king does not possess the virtues of a king. When confronted with difficulties he hesitates, he falters; Creon must solve them for him. At the news that the enemy is about to invest the city, he wishes to make a sally with an army of inferior size, and to give battle in the open, and he talks about soon flooding the plain with the blood of the Argives. When Creon's prudent counsels have somewhat calmed his youthful impetuousness, he successively proposes three ways of routing the enemy: a surprise by

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 510 *et seq.*

[2] *Phoen. Maid.* 524, 525. Cicero (*De Officiis*, iii, 21, 82) reproaches Euripides with this maxim; Caesar quoted it.

night, an attack while they are at supper, a cavalry charge. As none of these meets with Creon's approval, nothing is left for Eteocles but to follow his advice, simply to send out seven Theban leaders to meet the seven Argive leaders.[1] He says he has not the time to name these leaders, but we may assume that he would have much trouble in naming them because he would have difficulty in choosing them. Eteocles, who in his conversation with Creon has just shown himself a very unskilful strategist, apparently does not know how to choose his supporters—one of the gifts of a commander. Moreover, this man, who is in so much of a hurry, finds time before going out to meet the enemy to give recommendations to Creon regarding his family. In the first place he wishes his sister Antigone to marry Haemon, Creon's son, this prospective marriage being one of the elements which are to constitute the last scene of the tragedy. Then he commands that no one under pain of death shall bury Polyneices, since Antigone, at the close, is to desire to violate that order, and a conflict is to ensue on this point between her and Creon which may prove interesting. We cannot fail to recognize the artificiality of these dispositions of Eteocles, invented solely for the purpose of justifying in advance incidents which are not a part of the subject and of connecting them with the drama. Euripides' Eteocles, so busy with side issues, so devoid of clear-sightedness and of decision in essential matters, ambitious cynic that he is, without talent and without character, cannot stand comparison with the energetic figure of Aeschylus' Eteocles.

There is another reason for Euripides' inferiority. The chorus which plays such a part in the *Seven against Thebes* is composed of Theban maidens, whereas those composing Euripides' chorus are Phoenicians. We are informed by the poet—and this information is useful—that as result of a victory won by the Tyrians these young women have been sent to Greece to be consecrated as a gift to the worship of Apollo. Just as they were turning toward Delphi, their goal, the unexpected arrival of the Argive army forced them to take refuge in Thebes. But what was the need of making the chorus come from such a distance? Why this whole story? The scholiast thought that he had discovered the

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 710–750.

poet's intention: "It is by design," he says, "that the women of the chorus are not natives, but foreigners: the poet desires that they may subsequently be able to reproach Eteocles for his injustice, with nothing to fear. How could they have criticised the king, had they been his subjects?"[1] This explanation, ingenious as it appears, is not correct. In what does the chorus' criticism of Eteocles' injustice consist? In one single remark in the whole play, and one that is contained in two verses.[2] Is it on account of these two verses, which by the way are not very compromising for those who pronounce them, that Euripides invented this story of maidens sent from Tyre to Delphi, and that he constituted his chorus as he did? May we not simply assume that he chose Phoenician maidens because Aeschylus, in whose footsteps he did not wish to follow, had chosen Theban maidens? But this assertion of independence has not been to his advantage. In Aeschylus, the maidens tremble for their fathers, for their brothers, for their families and for themselves; they are a prey to the anguish of women who expect to see their city taken by storm. In Euripides, they have neither parents nor friends within the walls of Thebes, and consequently merely feel sympathy for the city whose hospitality they enjoy,—a sympathy feebly motivated by a distant community of origin between the two peoples. It is therefore impossible that they should have a deep interest in the issue. The chorus of the *Phoenician Maidens* was bound to be less effective than that of the *Seven against Thebes* from the very fact that it was composed of foreigners.

That is only a minor difference. The chief difference is that Euripides, in dealing with the same subject as Aeschylus, felt obliged to substitute a complex plot for a simple one. The inevitable result of this complexity was twofold: in the first place a part of the events which in Aeschylus took place behind the scenes had to occur on the stage; and secondly there was less narrative and more action. It demanded furthermore the introduction of characters unknown to Aeschylus' drama. Hence the poet's creations: Polyneices so pathetic, Menoeceus so heroic, Iocasta so true a mother. Consequently, the *Phoenician Maidens* is not, like the

[1] Schol. *Phoen. Maid.* 202.

[2] *Phoen. Maid.* 526, 527.

Seven against Thebes, solely a war drama that produces a single impression, but a human drama of varied effects; its catastrophes remain terrible, but the incidents which mingle with the main current of its plot frequently touch our hearts.

Let us now turn to Euripides' *Electra*, which recalls to mind the *Choephori* and at the same time Sophocles' *Electra*. We do not intend to make a complete and detailed comparison of these three tragedies, which would certainly lack novelty,[1] but simply to determine, if possible, by means of a brief comparison what we should like to know, namely, Euripides' method of procedure when he devoted himself to subjects which had been dealt with by others before him.

The plot of the *Choephori* is extremely simple. Electra and the women of the chorus offer libations at the tomb of Agamemnon in obedience to Clytemnestra, who has just been terrified by a dream; here occurs the recognition between Orestes and his sister, who then form their plan of revenge. Orestes and Pylades gain entrance to the palace by means of a ruse. Aegisthus is summoned to receive the strangers; he appears and falls beneath their blows. Clytemnestra contends with her son on the stage, and is then led by him within, and murdered behind the scene. The scene opens, and we see the dead bodies of Aegisthus and his accomplice. Orestes, who in slaying his mother has obeyed Apollo's command, in order to justify his act displays the robe in which Agamemnon had once been entangled by the murderers; but his soul begins to be troubled and he already sees the Furies.—In Sophocles, where the principal character is not Orestes, but Electra, the scene of recognition differs from that in the *Choephori* by involving a surprise. The ashes of Orestes are brought to Electra; Electra thinks her brother is dead—a moment later he appears to her in the flesh. Furthermore the two murders follow one another in different order: Clytemnestra is slain first, and speedily, by her son; Aegisthus falls after her; the horror of parricide is mitigated by the impression of justice made by this second act of vengeance. Finally Orestes is not pursued by the Furies, nor is he to be so pursued.

[1] This comparison was made long ago at great length by M. Patin, *Trag. grecs*, vol. ii, chap. viii. H. Weil has made a shorter comparison, but with rare precision (Note to the *Electra* in his edition of *Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*).

If, as is generally believed,[1] the *Electra* of Sophocles preceded that of Euripides, our poet had to compete with two masters of tragic art; and he must have been much embarrassed in his attempt to give a novel and individual treatment to a subject that was well known and very popular, whose essential features he was not allowed to change. This embarrassment appears more than once in his reconstruction of the play. Some of the means which he employs to refurbish this old drama of vengeance for the murder of Agamemnon look less like happy inventions than expedients. In the first place he changes the locality of the scene. In the *Choephori* Orestes and Electra meet and recognize one another not far from the palace, near Agamemnon's tomb. It is near that dead hero, whom they invoke and who seems almost to be present during their conference, that they mutually encourage and exhort one another to vengeance. In Sophocles, the scene is likewise at Mycenae, in front of the dwelling of the Atridae. In Euripides it is in the country. And why? Because Electra dwells in a cottage on the slope of a hillside, where she is the companion of a poor farmer, whom Aegisthus has forced her to marry. This farmer is certainly a very respectable man; but of what use is he in the rest of the play except to furnish the poet an opportunity for one or two tirades against the presumptuous claims of the nobility? Here then we have an invention that introduces a character who is of no service in the action. It is true that this rustic household offers hospitality, as it happens, to Orestes, in his wanderings through Argos in search of his sister, together with his friend Pylades. As this hospitality is as meagre as it is cordial, the good laborer is obliged to go and borrow food from a neighbor in order to entertain his guests properly; and this neighbor happens to be Agamemnon's foster-father, the aged man who long ago rescued Orestes from Aegisthus; and finally it is he who, when he brings the provisions for which he has been asked, is to recognize Orestes. Thus Electra, reduced to the state of a peasant; the countryman, who is her husband in name only; the old man of the neighborhood—all serve merely

[1] In fact, the date of Sophocles' *Electra* cannot be settled even approximately, and it is from artistic reasons, which are not decisive, that this tragedy is generally regarded as earlier than that of Euripides, which apparently should be placed in the year 413.

to bring about the recognition by means other than those which Aeschylus and Sophocles had employed. Possibly these means will seem to us to be too labored.

This change in the environment of the action necessarily modifies the circumstances of the two murders. We wonder why Aegisthus and Clytemnestra should have left the palace and the city to go into the country, there to fall, one after the other, under the blows of Pylades and Orestes. But are not the fields peopled by deities? Aegisthus is supposed to be led afield by the rather improbable desire of honoring the rural deities. Orestes, who has not stopped to taste the joys of Electra's embrace and who wishes to act without delay, learns from the old man that Aegisthus is very near at hand, engaged in preparations for a sacrifice in honor of the Nymphs. The king's guard is not with him; he has only a few slaves about him; thus the moment is propitious. Orestes leaves. After a few moments cries are heard; Aegisthus has been killed, so the messenger reports, and presently the two friends drag in his bleeding corpse, which Electra takes savage pleasure in insulting.

The motive which brings Clytemnestra upon the scene is just as banal. Electra, in order to attract her mother, sends word to her that she has been delivered of a son, and that in her inexperience she needs her aid in offering to the gods the sacrifice which is customary on the tenth day. Clytemnestra, who has no doubt taken a road other than that near which Aegisthus has perished, arrives without a suspicion. She crosses the threshold of the cottage in which Orestes and Pylades are hidden, and falls into the snare. These circumstances make the Electra of Euripides a very different person from the Electra of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Here Orestes is nothing but the arm which tremblingly executes the vengeance of which Electra is the determined spirit. Electra, and not her brother, manifests decision, coolness, absence of scruples and of emotion, fierce hatred. It is she who contrives the snare set for her mother, and who calmly leads her into it; it is she whose voice encourages Orestes when his heart fails him; and when he covers his eyes with his cloak, so as not to see what he is doing, it is Electra who directs the point of the sword in her brother's hand against the breast of their entreating mother. This girl, whose cruelty is implacable, who does not hesitate for a moment, who

does not for an instant hear the voice of blood, frankly horrifies us. Euripides made her such intentionally, not only that she might not resemble the Electra of his predecessors, but also that the execution of a mother's murder might appear odious and revolting, and that those who saw his drama[1] might condemn such a murder in the name of natural morality. Owing to this purpose, which is evident, his drama produces an impression different from that made by the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles on the same subject. Moreover, as has been frequently shown, it is very inferior to them, both in the construction of its plot and in the delineation of its characters. But Euripides' *Electra* is one of the poorest of his extant plays, while the corresponding dramas of his rivals are among their masterpieces. It would be unjust to base our judgment of the poet's entire art on this single comparison.

The relation of Euripides' *Orestes* to Aeschylus' *Eumenides* is much less close. These tragedies resemble one another only in two points: in both Orestes is a prey to the Furies, the avengers of his mother; in both he undergoes trial. But the Furies in Aeschylus' drama are real persons, whom we actually behold; they exist only as phantoms and visions of a diseased brain in Euripides' play. The trial, in Euripides, instead of taking place before the Areopagus, occurs in the popular assembly of Argos, a fact which entirely changes its circumstances and character. Orestes' fate is under discussion in both cases, but in Euripides the fate of Electra is linked to that of her brother, and the incidents as well as the ending of the action are altogether different. In fact, the poet has invented a new plot so as not to be embarrassed by memories of Aeschylus. His *Orestes* begins where the *Electra* ends, several days after the murder, just as Menelaus, who has been drifting about on the sea for a much longer time than Agamemnon, returns from the Trojan expedition and lands at Argos with Helen, whom he has recovered. Menelaus is to be one of the chief characters of the drama. Orestes, who foresees that the parricides will be condemned by the Argives, puts all his hopes in Menelaus. Hardly has he arrived when Orestes invokes him and implores his support. But

[1] The Dioscuri, at the close of the play, are careful to put the responsibility for this deed, which in their eyes is a crime, upon Apollo (1266–1296). Cf. *Orestes*, 29, 30.

Menelaus displays more prudence than generosity; he is moved less by Orestes' appeal than by the anger of the aged Tyndareus, Clytemnestra's father, who demands vengeance for the crime. When Orestes insists, he answers vaguely; he hesitates and makes no promises; finally he declares that he is powerless. Pylades comes upon the scene and Orestes tells him the situation. The two youths decide to go to the popular assembly together, where Orestes is to plead his own cause. But this step saves neither Orestes nor Electra; they are condemned by the judgment of the people to take their own lives before the day ends. While brother and sister speak with one another for the last time, Pylades, who proclaims his readiness to die with them, suggests to them a new scheme: before they die they must take revenge upon Menelaus, who has betrayed and abandoned them. The surest way to reach him is to kill the woman whom he still loves notwithstanding her faithlessness,—Helen, whose death will give satisfaction to Greece. Electra also proposes, as a measure of precaution against the rage of Menelaus, to seize Hermione and hold her as an hostage. The plan upon which they have determined is carried out. We hear the cries of Helen, whom Orestes and Pylades traitorously attempt to murder; Hermione arrives and falls into the hands of the two friends, who keep her in sight of those without. In vain does Menelaus, who has returned too late, shake the gates of the palace. The palace is securely closed, and from above Orestes shows Menelaus his daughter, whose bare throat he threatens with the point of his sword. He will slay her unless her father consents to intervene and induce the Argives to withdraw the sentence of death. Menelaus, divided between desire for vengeance and a father's instincts, does not know how to decide, when Apollo opportunely arrives to put an end to his perplexity and to arrange matters. Helen, who has miraculously disappeared after being menaced by Orestes and Pylades, is hereafter to be called the daughter of Zeus and is to dwell in heaven. Orestes is to submit to a second trial at Athens, at which he is to be acquitted, and he is then to be reconciled with Menelaus and marry his daughter Hermione, while Pylades is to take Electra as his wife.

This hasty analysis shows that, apart from the interest which attaches to Orestes, the play has hardly anything in common with the *Eumenides*. For a serious and religious tragedy with a simple

plot, Euripides has substituted a drama entirely human, full of varied events and unexpected occurrences, whose dénouement—even the ancients noticed this[1]—is rather like the dénouement of a comedy.

Among the plays on subjects that Euripides dealt with after Aeschylus, there is only one other which affords, in its dramatic action, certain points of comparison between the two poets,—the *Philoctetes*. Euripides' *Philoctetes*, performed with the *Medea* and the *Dictys* in 431, antedates Sophocles' by more than twenty years. In this case, therefore, our poet had only the rivalry of Aeschylus to encounter.

We should know virtually nothing about either Aeschylus' drama or Euripides', had not a rhetorician of Trajan's time, Dio Chrysostom, one day conceived the notion of reading consecutively and comparing these three tragedies of the three great masters, and had he not taken the trouble to transmit to us the impressions he got in reading them.[2] These impressions—and we could wish that they were more complete—merit our attention.—If we may trust Dio, each of the three plays is a masterpiece; he declares that it was impossible for him to find a passage "which would indicate the defeat of any one of the three rivals." It appears, however, that in Aeschylus, whose nobility, antique simplicity, boldness of thought and expression Dio praises, the action sometimes left something to be desired, especially on the score of probability. Aeschylus had brought Odysseus and Philoctetes together in Lemnus, but he had assumed that the latter did not recognize his enemy. "Those who do not love Aeschylus," says the rhetorician, "might reproach him for not having endeavored sufficiently to make this assumption admissible." Dio, who is impartial and fair-minded, then attempts to justify the older poet by calling attention to the fact that the lapse of ten years must have wrought some change in the features of Odysseus, and by suggesting that Philoctetes, wounded, sick, and condemned to long solitude, may well have lost his memory for faces. These apologies certainly do not suffice. There is another improbability in Aeschylus' play: the members of the chorus, who

[1] See the first argument of the play.

[2] Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 52. This passage has been translated by M. Egger in his *Histoire de la critique chez les Grecs*, pp. 441–447, 3d edition.

were not companions of Neoptolemus as in Sophocles, but Lemnians, approached Philoctetes as though they saw him for the first time, and as though, during the ten years which the unfortunate man had lived in their island, no one had ever spoken a word to him. Euripides, who, says the rhetorician, "approaches every detail with so much care and intelligence, who admits no improbabilities and neglects nothing," was not to incur the same reproach. With him everything is foreseen. Odysseus addresses Philoctetes at the very beginning of the drama, but there is no possibility of his being recognized, because his patron goddess, Athena, who urges him to this step, has changed his appearance and altered his voice. On the other hand, as it is impossible that none of the inhabitants of Lemnus should have had relations with Philoctetes, Euripides introduces into his play a Lemnian named Actor, who is known to the hero, doubtless because he had taken an interest in his unhappy lot.[1]

Another essential difference between the two plays lay in the fact that in Euripides' drama the Trojans sent a deputation to Philoctetes, instructed to persuade him to come to the defence of their country with the arms of Heracles. Priam's envoys thus met the envoys of the Greeks, Odysseus and Diomedes, in front of Philoctetes' cave. The former tried to exploit the hero's hatred against his former companions in arms, while the latter tried to quiet his rancor and reawaken in him love for his Greek fatherland. This situation, while lending a new interest to the plot, furnished material for one of those debates in which Euripides delighted. We can readily believe Dio Chrysostom, who must have been well versed in rhetoric, when he states that Euripides showed consummate skill in the scene where his characters pleaded two opposite causes; he displayed "an incomparable inventiveness and cleverness in oratory." We may also believe him when he speaks of the "useful lessons" contained in this tragedy, whose choruses especially abounded in moral maxims and exhortations. Thus the dramas of Euripides had in the year 431—and the *Medea* does not disprove this assertion —some of the essential qualities, or, if we prefer, some of the essential defects, which differentiate them from those of Sophocles.

[1] In Hyginus (*Fab.* 102), Actor is king of Lemnus, and it is one of his shepherds, named Iphimachus, who supplies Philoctetes with nourishment.

Dio Chrysostom likewise informs us about the character of Odysseus in the three plays. "Aeschylus' Odysseus," he says, "possesses the shrewdness and the cunning of men of that period, but he is far from being so malign as the men of our day. Sophocles' Odysseus is more human, and dissembles less than Euripides' hero." This last remark is confirmed by what we know of the first scene of Euripides' play, of which Dio, in another passage,[1] has given us a prose paraphrase. — Odysseus, who has just delivered the prologue, sees Philoctetes approach. The latter does not recognize him in his disguise, and they begin to converse. Odysseus soon tells him that he is a Greek, one of those who went to Troy. These words come near costing him dear, for Philoctetes' first impulse is a desire to revenge himself for his abandonment on the island: he draws his bow and aims at Odysseus, who just has time to put him on the wrong track by assuring him that he likewise has suffered at the hands of the Greeks, and that he has been obliged to leave the army because he was persecuted by Odysseus. He rouses Philoctetes' indignation by relating to him how Odysseus had Palamedes condemned to death by slanderously accusing him of treason, and how since that time he has been venting his hatred on all the friends of Palamedes. He himself fled from the camp of the Greeks in order to escape his threats, and has thus disembarked at Lemnus. Then Philoctetes, whose confidence he has gained by these means, tells him all about his sad lot. — In this scene Euripides' Odysseus gave proof of a power of dissimulation which almost amounted to cynicism, since he dared to recall the most odious deed of his own life, the condemnation of Palamedes to death.[2] It therefore appears that the poet had exaggerated the traditional character of Odysseus to the point of making him absolutely odious.

How was the dénouement brought about? Sophocles, who came last, uses a device for which Euripides has often set him the example, — a divine intervention. In Sophocles' drama Heracles appears at the end of the play and persuades Philoctetes to go to Troy with his arms. There is nothing to indicate that the case was the same in the other two poets; the device used by Sophocles even

[1] Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 59.

[2] We have said that this episode was the subject of a tragedy by Euripides, the *Palamedes*, in which all Odysseus' perfidy and rascality must have appeared.

warrants our assuming that it was not. All that is known about the means invented by Euripides to produce the dénouement is that, in his drama, Philoctetes, after his pains had been assuaged, tried by aiming at a distant point to determine whether he was still as clever a bowman as formerly, and that Odysseus entered the lists with him.[1] It was in this wise that Philoctetes' bow and arrows got into the hands of Odysseus, who was not to give them up again.

Euripides is not unworthy of the praise that Dio heaps upon him. In his treatment of the subjects in which he was willing to enter the lists with Aeschylus, we are struck with the cleverness he shows in inventing situations and creating characters; with the fertility of his imagination in the varied detail of situation and incident; with his ingenuity in foreseeing and avoiding the improbabilities into which Aeschylus had fallen, either from inexperience or indifference; and finally with his dexterity in mingling and interlacing the threads of an action whose complexity recalls that of actual life. But do his skill and cleverness make up for his inferiority in so many other particulars, and offset the deficiency of his genius and the debased demands of his time? In a word, is not the tragic impression made by Aeschylus' elementary dramas still stronger than that produced by these more skilfully managed plays with their clever devices? And is not the strength of that impression due precisely to the simplicity of action to which Euripides, in his desire both to emancipate himself from his predecessors and to satisfy the new demands of the public, could no longer adhere?

IV

COMIC ELEMENTS

Among the varied inventions in which Euripides' facile art revels, there are some which appear foreign to the true essence of tragedy. In his desire to make the heroic drama a faithful picture of actual life, the poet was sometimes led to disregard the distinction — very marked up to his time — between the tragic and comic styles; he introduced a touch of comedy into his tragedies. Quintilian, who

[1] Himerius, *Orat.* xiv, 1. On this whole question, see Welcker (*Griech. Trag.* vol. ii, pp. 512–522), who compares the fragments of the *Philoctetes* of Euripides with the account of Dio Chrysostom.

regarded Menander as an admirer and studious imitator of Euripides, was not mistaken in asserting this relation.[1] That which recalls the new comedy to mind is not merely the spirit of observation, so apparent in all the dramas we are studying, nor the satire on the manners and ideas of the period which we find in them, nor the attention to social questions, nor the tone of the philosophical dicta, nor the language; many of the plays also contain scenes which considered by themselves are properly scenes of comedy.

Does the *Alcestis* contain instructive examples of this? In the beginning of the play there undoubtedly are certain details which provoke a smile. Death meets Apollo at the gate of Admetus' palace and notices that the god is armed with a bow, and this bow seems to him to presage nothing good. Twice Apollo is obliged to reassure his interlocutor by protesting that his intentions are honest. In the course of this dialogue, these two characters, who appear occasionally not to understand one another very well, exchange a series of tit-for-tats which are quite amusing notwithstanding their subtilty.[2] Toward the end of the altercation between Admetus and his father also, we note the tone of comedy in the frankness with which the old man loudly declares his love of life.[3] Nor is Heracles a true tragic hero. He is received and entertained in the house of Admetus, although it is in mourning; here he takes his ease and has a jolly time, swilling great beakers of wine and bawling gross songs; then he comes out intoxicated and loquacious, to give the servant that attends him amusing advice of doubtful morality. But the *Alcestis*, as has often been remarked, was the fourth piece, the satyr-drama,[4] among the plays which the author presented at this time in competition for the prize. It is therefore generally supposed that the poet, while intentionally weaving into the plot of his play scenes both of joy and of sadness, which are so near to one another in real life, wished to recall the style of the satyr-drama, of which Heracles, with his

[1] *Inst. Orat.* x, 1, 69. M. Guillaume Guizot (in his study of *Menander*, p. 360 *et seq.*) has shown by means of ingenious analysis the influence which Euripides may have had on comedy.

[2] *Alcestis*, 35 *et seq.*, 49, 55 *et seq.*

[3] *Alcestis*, 712–726.

[4] The author of the second argument of the play enumerates the dramas of the tetralogy in the following order: *The Cretan Women, Alcmaeon at Psophis, Telephus, Alcestis.*

gross tastes and excessive sensuality, was one of the traditional characters.

A hero in a state of intoxication[1] was not, however, a novelty on the tragic stage. In his *Cabiri* Aeschylus had already represented Jason's companions overcome by wine and staggering.[2] Sophocles had gone farther. In the drama called the *Banquet of the Achaeans*, which certainly was a tragedy, he described an orgy of the Greek chiefs, and did not shrink from the grossest realism. Odysseus, excited by drink, threw a missile at Thersites "which had nothing fragrant about it," a vessel which broke on that unfortunate's head.[3] We are amazed at this. The name of Sophocles awakens in our minds conceptions so noble that we are disconcerted by this detail, which is too well authenticated to be doubted. But it shows us that the fact of Heracles' intoxication in the *Alcestis* of Euripides is not in itself sufficient to warrant us in refusing to consider this play a pure tragedy, equally with the *Cabiri* of Aeschylus and the *Banqueters* of Sophocles.

The same doubts do not apply to the *Helen*. In this play it is not simply a scene or two that have little appearance of tragedy; the very idea of the play involves comic situations. The poet, not in the least disquieted because he contradicts himself,[4] represents Helen in the drama which bears her name no longer as the adulteress who has followed the handsome Paris across the seas; she is no longer the wonderful beauty fatal alike to Greeks and to Trojans. Reduced to the proportions of an ordinary woman and honest wife, she loves her husband in bourgeois fashion, and remains true to him during the whole time of her separation from him. When

[1] Note, moreover, that Heracles is not stupidly drunk; his mind dwells on the uncertainty of the future and the thought of death.

[2] "Aeschylus was the first," says Athenaeus (x, p. 428 f), "and not as some claim Euripides, to bring drunken people on *in tragedy*." We cannot assume then that the *Cabiri* was a satyr-drama. Welcker, noting the subject of the play, which dealt with the expedition of the Argonauts and with Lemnus, conjectures that it was a part of the same trilogy as the *Argo* and the *Hypsipyle*.

[3] Athen. i, p. 17 d–f. Fragm. 140, Nauck.

[4] In the *Daughters of Troy* Helen is an object of hatred and execration. Menelaus does not forgive her. He commands his slaves to drag her by the hair out of Agamemnon's tent, and he takes her back to Greece with the intention of having her stoned to death. In the *Orestes* likewise she is treated very harshly. Orestes and Pylades are about to kill her in order to take revenge on her for the misfortunes of Greece, when she is carried off into heaven.

the war is over they meet in a foreign land, and she is truly happy to see him again; she is free from every taint, no illicit desire has even touched her heart. This new-fashioned Helen would have been unrecognizable had not the poet in the prologue warned the audience of the change. The transformation of Helen's character is not, it is true, Euripides' device; it was invented by the lyric poet Stesichorus of Himera. He is said to have been punished with blindness by the Dioscuri for speaking of Helen in a disrespectful manner in one of his songs. When he learned the reason for his blindness, Stesichorus composed another lyric, his *Palinode*, in which he made the *amende honorable*, by declaring Helen innocent of all the wickedness that had been imputed to her. The poet immediately regained his eyesight.[1] But how was it possible, except as a joke, to change the tradition to such an extent? To suppress Helen's guilt amounted to suppressing the cause of the Trojan War, and consequently the Trojan War itself; it amounted to giving the lie to Homer and to the poets who had been inspired by the Homeric poems. Stesichorus, in order to harmonize accounts, invented an ingenious explanation which Euripides subsequently borrowed from him. He claimed that it was not Helen herself whom Paris took away to Troy, but only her semblance, her shade, a phantom moulded after her image. Greeks and Trojans slew one another for the sake of this phantom, while the true Helen, the Helen of flesh and blood, was carried off by Hermes and transported to the island of Pharos in Egypt, where Menelaus was some day to find her. This resolution of Helen into a real person and a phantom was a bizarre invention, which must have produced a comic effect when put upon the stage. That is just what happens in Euripides' play.

When Menelaus is cast upon the shores of Egypt by a storm, he leaves the woman whom until then he has taken for Helen in a cave, under the protection of his shipwrecked companions, and sets out to reconnoitre the country and search for help in his distress. But when he knocks at the door of a house, — the palace of the king of Egypt, — the old woman who opens for him, after exchanging a few words, informs him that this is the dwelling of Helen. Menelaus fails to understand. How can Helen be at the same time in this

[1] Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 243 a. Cf. the rehabilitation of Helen by Isocrates in his Ἐγκώμιον.

palace and in the grotto which he has just left?[1] His astonishment changes into uneasy stupefaction when the next moment the true Helen appears before his eyes. He certainly thinks he recognizes her: it is she — he certainly does recognize her. As for Helen, she knows her husband again notwithstanding the rags which cover him. But try as she will, she does not succeed in entirely convincing Menelaus of her identity. He is profoundly puzzled. How can he be the husband of two Helens at the same time, "he who has married only one"?[2] His embarrassment is very amusing. This equivocal situation, which the poet makes the best of without unduly prolonging it, finally comes to an end. One of his shipwrecked companions arrives and most opportunely relates that the woman who was in the cave, the spurious Helen, has suddenly vanished into the air, like a phantom. Menelaus is relieved of a great burden: he need no longer fear that he is a bigamist, and with the real woman whom he has just found, the only Helen there is, he abandons himself to demonstrations of purest joy and to the display of great tenderness. But where is the tragedy?

The same question may be asked about a scene in the *Ion*, that in which Xuthus and Apollo's son meet for the first time. It will be remembered that the god, in order to extricate himself from the delicate situation in which he is placed with reference to Creusa, has conceived the plan of having her husband adopt the child which is really his own. "The first person thou shalt meet on leaving the temple," the oracle has said to Xuthus, "will be thy son." And Xuthus, though astonished, obeys the god's leading and does not hesitate to call young Ion, who is the first to meet his eyes, his son. Were he really the father of the boy, the scene might be touching. But as Xuthus is not his father, but merely the husband of his mother, and as he plays in the drama the part of a dupe, and consequently, though he who dupes him is a god, seems a little ridiculous, the scene has merely a humorous effect and provokes a smile. We are amused that Xuthus should be so simple-minded. Contrary to expectation, it is the young man Ion, in this affair, who is clear-sighted or at the least curious, and the mature man Xuthus who is not. Ion is not satisfied with the discovery that he has a father whose existence he had not suspected; he wishes particularly to

[1] *Helen*, 470–500. [2] *Helen*, 571 *et seq.*

learn who his mother is and how he came into the world. About this Xuthus knows nothing; he loses himself in conjectures which are far from edifying, and finally appears to feel so little concern about the matter that we are diverted by his naïveté, which comes very close to foolishness.[1] But Xuthus is not a hero of the noble land of Attica; he is an Achaean, a foreigner united by marriage to an Athenian family, and we are at liberty to laugh at him.

Sometimes, therefore, we find a comic situation in Euripides' dramas which is due to the very subject of the play. More frequently there are characters whose language at times produces a comic effect, although the events in which they take part are tragic. But these characters are various and must be distinguished. Slaves and common people, for example, nowhere in Greek tragedy share in the sentiments of the heroes, and occasionally they provoke a smile by the naïve expression of their egotism. Messengers hardly ever arrive on the scene without complaints about the length of the road they have traversed; about the cold or the heat they have endured; about the dangers, real or imagined, which they have escaped; they often stop to relate a thousand insignificant details before they come to the important event, often of capital significance, which they have been charged to report. Nurses likewise waste more than one useless word. Cilissa, the nurse in the *Choephori*, is distressed at the false news of Orestes' death; but what touches her most in this misfortune is the uselessness of the trouble which the child gave her when he was in swaddling-clothes, the memory of the nights she spent with him long ago. She gives the barest and most realistic details about the baby's clothes and the necessity she was under to foresee all its needs, often without success.[2] And we laugh at the chatter of this good woman at the very moment when we are moved; for she is going to seek Aegisthus, and we foresee that his arrival will bring the climax of the drama. Similarly in Sophocles' *Antigone* there is a man of the people, a guard, whose speech and bearing are in contrast with the gravity of the situation; he has been sent to announce to Creon that the body of Polyneices, notwithstanding the watch that was kept over it, has received the first funeral rites from an unknown hand. The anxiety of this man, who has come in trepidation against his will, his cau-

[1] *Ion*, 517–565.

[2] Aesch. *Choephori*, 749 *et seq.*

tious and halting speech in breaking the unpleasant news to the king, the care he takes to disavow responsibility, his hurry to get away as soon as he has accomplished his mission [1]—all this is truly amusing.

Thus Euripides is not the first tragic poet to let slaves talk in a manner that roused the hilarity of the audience. But perhaps the slave in his *Orestes* is more comical than any of his fellows had been up to that time. This man—a serious matter for him—is a Phrygian eunuch, who is recognized by his costume even before he opens his mouth. Asiatics as *dramatis personae* were doubtless not novel to the Athenians, who had seen performances of the *Edonians*, the *Bassarides* and the *Persians* of Aeschylus; but this means of making a barbarian ridiculous was always sure to please the Greeks. The spectators began by laughing at this Phrygian's garb; then they laughed more heartily at his fright and scared look. In order to escape the danger which threatens him he has slipped out between the Doric triglyphs,—or in modern terms has jumped out of the window,—and here he is running to and fro on the stage, possessed by such fear that "he would like to fly away through the plains of air or over the sea which the stream of Ocean enfolds in its arms." [2]

What has happened to him? He was beside Helen, engaged in waving a fan of feathers about the head of his mistress, when the catastrophe occurred. Orestes, under pretext of asking a favor of Helen, induced her to approach the hearth of Pelops, while Pylades drove the slaves out of the room and put them under lock and key. Then the crime was perpetrated. Orestes seized Helen by the hair, bent her head over her left shoulder, and plunged his sword into her neck. When she cried out, the slaves broke down the doors of the rooms in which they were locked and ran to their mistress' rescue. But of what avail is a crowd of Phrygians against two desperate Greeks? Some are killed, others wounded; most of them—and our friend is one of these—have sought safety in prudent flight. But the unhappy man has not reached the end of his trials. Suddenly he finds himself face to face with Orestes, who

[1] Soph. *Antigone*, 223–231. The messenger in Euripides' *Suppliants* declares that he brings good news: *first* he himself is safe; *then* Theseus is victorious.

[2] *Orestes*, 1375 *et seq.*

comes out of the palace and pursues him with drawn sword. Then there begins a true scene from comedy. The Phrygian cares for his masters, Helen and Menelaus, but he cares much more for himself, and is ready to make every sacrifice in order to save his miserable slave's life; he will say anything Orestes pleases; he will perjure himself as often as he is asked. The hero addresses him and he answers:

"Didst thou not to Menelaus shout the rescue-cry but now?"
"Nay, O nay!—but for thine helping cried I:—worthier art thou."
"Answer—did the child of Tyndareus by righteous sentence fall?"
"Righteous—wholly righteous—though she had three throats to die withal."
"Dastard, 'tis thy tongue but truckles: in thine heart thou think'st not so."
"Should she not, who Hellas laid, and Phrygia's folk, in ruin low?"
"Swear—or I will slay thee,—that thou speakest not to pleasure me."
"By my life I swear—an oath I sure should honour sacredly."[1]

During this dialogue, we must imagine the slave on his knees, all a-tremble, in the attitude of Asiatic adoration, cringing before Orestes who stands over him and points his sword at him. This sword scares the Phrygian, and he says to Orestes:

"Take, take hence thy sword! It glareth ghastly murder held so near!"
"Fear'st thou lest thou turn to stone, as who hath seen the Gorgon nigh?"
"Nay, but rather to a corpse: of head of Gorgon nought know I."
"Thou a slave, and fearest Death, who shall from misery set thee free!"
"Every man, though ne'er so much a thrall, yet joys the light to see."
"Well thou say'st: thy wit hath saved thee. Hence within the house—away!"
"Then thou wilt not slay me?"—"Pardoned art thou."—"Kindly dost thou say."
"Varlet, mine intent may change!"—"Thou utterest now an evil note!"[2]

Orestes, as he immediately confesses, came out of the palace merely to prevent the slave from rousing Argos by his cries; he never intended to kill him, he merely amused himself by frightening him. Perhaps Orestes amuses himself too much for a man whose sword is stained with blood.[3] But is not this pleasantry, following immediately upon the account of the murder, exactly calculated to soften the impression made by Orestes' deed, whose odiousness is not sufficiently justified by his desire for vengeance? Helen, who

[1] *Orestes*, 1510–1517. [2] *Orestes*, 1519–1526.

[3] This is the comment which the scholiast makes at 1512, in these words: "What follows is not worthy of the tragedy nor of Orestes' situation."

has wronged the Greeks in general, has done no special wrong to Orestes; he has cause for complaint only against Menelaus. The latter refused to plead his cause with the Argives, but is that a reason for slaying his wife? The punishment is out of proportion to the offence. The poet, therefore, in introducing a comic scene just after this murderous assault, appears to be warning us not to take the murder of Helen too seriously,—an uncommon murder surely, since the victim suddenly disappears in a miraculous manner and the stroke of Orestes' sword renders her straightway immortal.

When Euripides makes a slave appear ridiculous, he does not diverge from tradition; when he provokes a laugh against a hero, he is making an innovation.[1] In his extant tragedies three heroes are tragicomic characters in their attitude and speech at certain stages of the action,—Amphitryon, Iolaus and Polyneices.

The first two, men very advanced in years, display, the one the egotism, the other the impotence, of old age. When Heracles, after the access of mad fury in which he has slain his wife and children, lies stretched on the ground, buried in heavy sleep, Amphitryon comes softly upon the scene and insistently urges the chorus not to make any noise. Does he hope that a prolonged rest may restore the hero's strength and reason? He is urgent chiefly because he fears for himself. He trembles lest Heracles may awaken too soon, burst the bonds by which he is confined, and rush upon him. Suddenly Heracles moves; he turns; perhaps he will awake from sleep. "Let me fly," says Amphitryon, "and hide myself in the innermost part of the palace." But the old man will not admit that he fears death; he tries to mislead us as to the reasons for his fear. He says, "If he kills me, me, his father, he will add another crime to those he has already committed; to the Furies who pursue him will be added the Fury that follows the parricide!" At the same time he runs to hide himself and implores the members of the chorus to do the same. Meanwhile Heracles wakes, not knowing where he is, and calls for some one of his friends. The tone of his voice apparently is not very threatening, for Amphitryon, who a moment ago was making off,

[1] There seems to be a certain comic touch in the dialogue of Prometheus and Ocean in Aeschylus (*Prom.* 284–396), and in Sophocles, in the poltroonery of Odysseus, who is alarmed, but is not willing to admit it (*Ajax*, 73 *et seq.*). But these traits are only slightly indicated. Euripides enlarges and insists upon them.

now assumes an heroic air. "Aged sirs," he asks the chorus, "should I approach the danger which menaces me?" At the same time a remnant of fright fixes him to the spot. Only when he has made certain that Heracles has recovered full possession of his reason does he become somewhat reassured, and with the encouragement of the corypheus, finally decide to approach.[1]

In Iolaus it is not poltroonery but excess of courage which is comical. When he hears that the Athenian army is drawn up before the Argive army, this broken old man, who can hardly drag himself along, is seized by the fever of combat and declares that he will make haste to the field of battle, where not a single foe will dare to meet his eye. To no purpose does the henchman show him that his strength is not as great as his courage: he is determined to go. The henchman enters the temple of Zeus the Savior, who has given asylum to the suppliants, and takes down and brings out a complete suit of battle armor; as this is much too heavy for Iolaus' shoulders, it is carried for him until the moment of entering into the conflict. And thus this extraordinary soldier leaves the stage, with bent back, with slow and feeble steps, a spear in his right hand, his left arm propped on his attendant, who is much needed to help him on. For all that, he speaks of falling on the Argives and smiting them through their shields with his valiant sword.[2] The contrast between his senile debility and his bellicose intentions is amusing.[3]

Polyneices, who is not old and decrepit, but a man in the vigor of his age, does not always behave like a tragic hero. He has entered Thebes by grace of an armistice, but is fearful and suspects a snare. He comes upon the scene slowly, with cautious steps, casting anxious glances to right and left. The sight of the sword which he holds tightly in his hand reassures him for a moment, but his con-

[1] *Heracles*, 1042–1076, 1109 *et seq.*

[2] *Children of Heracles*, 680–738.

[3] Old age is again made ridiculous for a moment in the *Bacchanals* when Tiresias and Cadmus, weighed down by age and quite decrepit, desire to hurry to Mt. Cithaeron and there join the women in the worship of Dionysus. "Try to support me," says the soothsayer to the king; "I'll do as much for you. It would be disgraceful to see two old men topple over" (363–365). Perhaps it also provoked a smile to see the chorus in the *Heracles*, which consisted of old men of trembling gait, drag themselves painfully along, leaning on their staves (108–113).

fidence does not last long. He has heard or thinks that he has heard a noise, and this sets him trembling. He cries, "Who goes there?" Fortunately for him, an altar is close at hand where he hopes to find refuge in case of trouble. The aspect of the maidens of the chorus, whom he judges from their bearing to be harmless, soon restores his composure, and then he bravely sheathes his sword.[1]— Polyneices' state of mind, it must be admitted, is rather improbable. When he enters the gates of Thebes, it would seem that he ought to have confidence in his mother, since it is his mother who has called him, and that he should not doubt her nor the sanctity of a truce. If he feared a trap, he should not have come without an escort, or else if ready to brave the danger, he should advance resolutely, determined to fight for his life if attacked. Why so many precautions? Does he wish to have time to fly before danger comes? But the gates of Thebes are closed behind him; all retreat is cut off. Does he fear to be surprised, and wish to be able to hold his own against the enemy? He is alone; what will his sword avail him against a crowd of adversaries? Polyneices' terrors are so unreasonable that this scene produces an impression which approaches very closely to the comical. But it would be difficult to believe that the poet did not feel this and did not intend it.[2] Ancient critics remarked that Euripides belittled the heroes of tragedy. Here he shows us Polyneices, who ought to be brave, nay bold to the point of rashness, trembling—almost a coward. He thus represents him not merely that the contrast with his brother Eteocles may be more complete, but chiefly no doubt because he wishes to attribute to this man, sprung from an heroic race, one of the most ignoble weaknesses of ordinary men.

Comic elements also enter at times into most tragic situations. In the *Bacchanals* Pentheus, disguised as a woman and a Maenad, who thinks that he sees two suns and a twofold Thebes and would like to carry Cithaeron on his shoulders, and Dionysus, who serves as his handmaiden, putting a rebellious lock of hair back under his cap, tightening the girdle which is too loose, arranging the folds of his garment,[3] amuse us while we tremble; for we know

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 261–277.

[2] This is what Gottfried Hermann thought. See his Preface to the *Phoenician Maidens.*

[3] *Bacch.* 912–946.

toward what dénouement the drama is advancing, and that it will be terrible.

Is this introduction of comic elements[1] into the very body of tragedy (although it is by no means of regular occurrence and it would be wrong[2] to exaggerate its importance) a reminiscence of that distant period when tragedy and comedy were still blended[3] in the Attic drama; when art, wandering at hazard in its inexperience, had not yet separated the two styles and circumscribed each of them within precise limits? Let us not believe that this is an affectation of archaism, but much rather an intentional innovation. Just as by creating characters of a less vigorous complexion than those of earlier days, Euripides hopes to render them more interesting through the very failings which lower them, but make them more human, so, by contriving scenes which border on comedy, he rests and distracts the spectators of a tragic drama and forces them to smile in the midst of their terrors and athwart their tears.[4]

[1] We might also cite among these elements the sort of riddle which a shepherd proposes in the *Theseus;* not knowing how to read, he described the characters of the word ΘΗΣΕΤΣ, and let the audience guess them letter by letter (Athen. x, p. 454 b; Nauck, fragm. 385). But this shepherd is a common man, and it was therefore proper for him to amuse the audience, as the messengers sometimes do in the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Moreover, to judge by the similar examples taken from Agathon and Theodectes, this Thesean riddle was a device familiar to the tragic poets (Athen. x, p. 454 c, d).

[2] Certain commentators on Euripides discovered bits of comedy throughout his plays. See the remark of the scholiast on the *Andromache*, verse 32.

[3] Arist. *Poetics*, iv, p. 1449 a.

[4] On the subject with which we have briefly dealt, see a part of M. Moncourt's Latin thesis, *De parte satirica et comica in tragoediis Euripidis* (Paris, 1851).

CHAPTER IV

ACTION (CONTINUED)

I

HAPPY ENDINGS AND DIVINE INTERVENTIONS

THE study of the comic elements in Euripides' tragedies suggests the consideration of the way in which his plays end. If we may believe the Greek grammarians some of them ended in a manner that conformed more to the practice of comedy than to that of tragedy. In his argument to the *Alcestis* Aristophanes of Byzantium expressly says: "The *Orestes* and *Alcestis* are rejected as composed in a style foreign to tragic poetry, since they begin with misfortunes but end happily, and this is characteristic rather of comedy."[1] This remark, which has been misused to prove that the *Orestes*, like the *Alcestis*, occupied the place of a satyr-drama,[2] must not be accepted without examination. So far as it relates to the *Orestes*, it is not entirely correct. This play has, in fact, a catastrophe toward the end, the slaying of Helen. It is true that this catastrophe, since the victim is presently to be transported to Olympus, does not move us very deeply; but it makes it impossible to say that the play ends altogether happily. It is also true that Orestes is to marry Hermione, and Pylades Electra; but these two marriages, arranged and announced by Apollo, are still in the future; they do not constitute the present ending of the play. On the other hand, that part of the *Alcestis* which resembles comedy, or more accurately speaking the satyr-drama, is merely the drunken scene in which Heracles appears; it is not the dénouement of the play, which is miraculous and is not at all comic.

We may likewise maintain that Aristophanes of Byzantium commits a grave error when he implies that tragedy excludes

[1] *Alcestis*, ed. Prinz, p. 4, ll. 11–14.

[2] H. Weil, in his Introduction to the *Orestes* (*Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*, pp. 676, 677), points out, among other reasons for condemning this view, that the satyr-dramas, or the plays like the *Alcestis*, which stood for them, were short and required only two actors for their performance. "On the contrary," he says, "the *Orestes* is one of Euripides' longest plays, and in it the poet makes abundant use of the three actors whom the regulations of the festival authorized him to use in tragedies properly so-called."

happy endings. Aristotle had said that unhappy endings conform best to the essential character of tragic art, and on the stage and in dramatic competition produce the greatest effect;[1] he did not go so far as to maintain that a tragic plot should never have a happy issue. Such an assertion would have been contradicted by the history of the Greek drama itself. We find tragedies which do not end with death and disaster, not only in Euripides, but also in Aeschylus and Sophocles. Perhaps it will be best to recall the facts in order to remove all doubt on this subject.

We naturally think of Aeschylus' dramas as entirely dominated by the baneful action of fate, but nevertheless they frequently have happy endings. At the close of the *Suppliants* Danaus and his daughters escape, through the intervention of the king of Argos, from the violence with which the herald of the sons of Aegyptus has threatened them. The *Prometheus Bound* was followed by the *Prometheus Delivered:* Hermes shoots the eagle with his arrows, and breaks the captive's chains; the Titan and Zeus are reconciled. The trilogy of the *Oresteia* ends with the acquittal of Orestes and the transformation of the Erinyes into the Eumenides. In Sophocles it is not trilogies, but independent tragedies, that have this same happy ending. Only the *Philoctetes* is of this type among the plays which we possess. But how many of his lost tragedies left a happy impression upon the spectator! The *Andromeda*, the *Creusa*, the *Polyidus*, may well have differed in plan, in the handling of the plot and in their events, from Euripides' plays on the same subjects; they cannot have had an ending of a different nature. It is hard to imagine that Sophocles' tragedy *Nausicaa* ended with a catastrophe. To speak particularly of plays about which we feel fairly certain, in the *Athamas* the hero, condemned to death by the vengeance of Nephele, was brought before the altar of Zeus to be immolated, but at the end of the play was saved by Heracles.[2] In the *Women of Lemnus* the women, after having given battle to the Argonauts who had descended upon their shores, made a peace with them which was the prelude of an intimate union.[3] In *Ajax the Locrian* Ajax was put on trial by the Greeks for having

[1] Arist. *Poetics*, xiii, p. 1453 a, 22–28, Vahlen.

[2] Aristoph. *Clouds*, 257 and schol.

[3] Schol. Apoll. Rhod. i, 769.

violated Cassandra, but was acquitted.[1] And finally the *Tereus* ended with a metamorphosis which snatched Philomela and Procne from death.[2] Euripides was thus warranted by the practice of his predecessors and rivals in putting upon the stage tragedies whose dénouement excited neither terror nor pity.

These tragedies, although less numerous than the others, are nevertheless not exceptional. To this class belong first the majority of the plays in which recognitions are brought about, the recognition having as its most usual result the restoration of children supposed to be lost to the affection of their parents. Creusa recovers in young Ion the son whom she bore to Apollo; Aegeus in Theseus gets again the son whom Aethra gave him; Alcmaeon, in Corinth, regains possession of his children; Alexander (Paris), exposed at his birth and taken up by shepherds, is subsequently recognized by his father Priam;[3] or it may be a husband, like Menelaus, who recognizes his wife and succeeds in escaping with her from the dangers which had beset them both.

Other tragedies end, not less happily, in marriages. Andromeda becomes the wife of Perseus, who has delivered her from death. Aerope has been condemned by her father to be cast into the sea, but Nauplius, to whom the execution of this order has been entrusted, disregards it and marries the maiden to Pleisthenes. As we have seen, the marriage of Pylades and Electra, of Orestes and Hermione, is announced at the end of the *Orestes*. And finally the Antigone of Euripides, contrary to the development of the plot in Sophocles, marries Haemon.[4] The vase-painting here reproduced (pl. iv) appears to indicate that this happy event was due to the intervention of Heracles.[5]

Elsewhere Euripides represents those who are unexpectedly res-

[1] Proclus, *Chrestom.* p. 461. Cf. Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* pp. 161–166.

[2] Aristoph. *Birds*, 100 and schol.

[3] These tragedies have already been dealt with in chapter iii (Recognitions).

[4] Aristoph. the grammarian, argument of Soph. *Antig.* Schol. *ibid.* 1350. Welcker and M. Mayer (*De Euripidis mythopoeia*, pp. 73–77) think that they discover the subject of the drama in Hyginus, *Fab.* 72. But this account may relate to an *Antigone* more recent than that of Euripides. Why should we bring into doubt, or interpret in an arbitrary manner, the very precise testimony of the grammarian Aristophanes and of the scholiast of Sophocles?

[5] For the interpretation of this vase see Vogel, *Scenen eurip. Tragödien*, pp. 50–55.

(*iv*) DÉNOUEMENT OF THE "ANTIGONE" OF EURIPIDES

cued by miraculous means when threatened with destruction. A false oracle demands the life of young Phrixus. Athamas, his father, is broken-hearted, but determines like Agamemnon to sacrifice his child for the common weal. Phrixus is brought before the altar of Zeus; he is about to be immolated, when his mother Nephele snatches him from the hands of the sacrificer and places him with Helle on the ram with the fleece of gold, who carries them off through the skies.[1] Iphigeneia likewise escapes death by a miracle. The priest has laid hold of the sword. He examines the place in her throat where he is to strike; he strikes, but the maid has disappeared. In her place there lies stretched on the altar a palpitating hind, whose blood flows in streams. What has become of Iphigeneia? She is not dead, as the blow which was meant for her did not reach her. Since she is alive, where can she be if not with the gods in the company of the virgin Artemis, who has just given such a brilliant exhibition of her power? Thus the ending of the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, which was to have been sad, is suddenly changed by the hidden but sure action of a deity into a happy ending. "Let us rejoice," says Agamemnon, "at the fate of our daughter; she dwells in truth among the gods."[2]

Agamemnon's satisfaction at Iphigeneia's fate is a mystical feeling too greatly at variance, we think, with nature and his own affection. Euripides' characters exhibit a more natural joy when they see those who are dear to them escape death, not to fly away to the abode of the gods, but to remain living with them on earth. There are some endings even more miraculous than those we have just cited—when the dead are restored to life. The first instance is the resurrection of Alcestis. Admetus' wife is certainly dead, for she is carried to her tomb. Heracles hides near the place where she is to be buried, and there lies in wait for Thanatos, the king of death; thence he rushes forth to seize and clasp him in his powerful arms and force him to give up his prey. The second resurrection is that of Glaucus, the young son of Minos, who is restored to life, not by a hero, but by a soothsayer, thanks to the virtues of a magic herb.[3]

We see how varied are the forms of happy endings in Euripides. "The most tragic of poets" did not always seek for the most

[1] Apollod. i, 9, 1. Hyginus, *Fab.* 2 and 3.

[2] *Iphig. at Aul.* 1621, 1622.

[3] See above, p. 215.

terrible and startling effects at the close of his dramas; but, following the example of Aeschylus and Sophocles, he chose subjects —perhaps more frequently than they—which enabled him to give the spectators that sort of satisfaction which we feel at the end of a play when those are saved from death for whose fate we have long despaired and trembled.

Happy endings are sometimes connected with those interventions of the gods which, as we know, are frequent in Euripides. In not less than eight of his seventeen extant tragedies, there appears what is known as the *deus ex machina*.[1] This expression, clear as it may appear to be, nevertheless needs explanation. We must distinguish the fact of divine intervention, together with the consequences it may have for the solution of the plot, from the means by which this intervention is brought about, that is, from the device which the poet employs to bring in the divinity. This is nearly always the *machine*.

The *machine* (ἡ μηχανή, without qualification), Pollux says, "brought into view the gods and the heroes who traverse the air, Bellerophon or Perseus."[2] Aeschylus had made use of it before Euripides. Prometheus, on the cliff to which he is fastened, hears the whir of a great flight of birds. These are the daughters of Oceanus, who are drawing near to him with powerful strokes of their wings. They at first commune with him from on high; not until later do they descend at his invitation and take their stand in the orchestra. The machine which has carried them, and which descends in order that they may dismount in the orchestra, is a winged car,[3] of large dimensions, since it carries the entire chorus. A machine of a different shape is the fantastic animal, the winged gryphon, which the aged Oceanus bestrides when he comes upon the scene to hold converse with Prometheus.[4] How Athena makes her appearance in the *Eumenides* is not clear. If we accept a very plausible emendation of a disputed passage, the goddess arrives in Athens from the shores of the Scamander, without wings and without a chariot; the folds of her aegis are filled by the winds,

[1] In Greek, ὁ ἀπὸ μηχανῆς θεός (Menand. ap. schol. Plat. p. 394).

[2] *Onomasticon*, iv, 128.

[3] *Prometheus*, 124–129; 135, Weil (Teubner edition).

[4] *Prometheus*, 286, 395.

which carry her onward;[1] thus she would have no need of a machine. But it was needed in Sophocles' *Andromeda*, since Perseus returned flying from the land of the Gorgons; perhaps also in Euripides' *Bellerophon*, in which the hero, at the opening of the play, no doubt appeared mounted on the horse Pegasus, which carried him aloft into the air.

The date of the *Bellerophon*[2] is not known, but we do know that Euripides employed a machine in 431 in the dénouement of one of his plays. Medea, who has murdered her sons, and put to death with awful suffering the young queen of Corinth and her father Creon, cannot by ordinary means escape the punishment which awaits her. In order that she may evade it, the poet has her mount upon a winged chariot, the gift of her father Helius; standing on this she scoffs from above at Jason and his impotent rage.[3] The machine which carries the enchantress from Colchis through the air is not the same as that which in later plays will bring down the gods from the sky. We have scant knowledge of the latter. We see merely that in Euripides' plays divine apparitions were produced in two different ways. Sometimes, as in the *Suppliants*, *Helen*, *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, *Orestes*, they are not announced, but appear suddenly, and it seems that they are not visible to the actors, but are perceived only by the spectators. In these cases we must imagine that the gods are on the *theologeion*, a sort of platform or gallery placed high above the scene which was supposed to represent the sky, the dwelling of the immortals, from which their voices descend.[4] Sometimes, as in the *Andromache*, *Ion* and *Electra*, the deity appears to the actors in the guise of a dazzling apparition, seen above the pinnacles of temple and palace, where its majestic radiance dazzles and awes the spectator. Ion says:

[1] *Eumen.* 403–405. In place of πώλοις, the reading of the manuscripts, some critics conjecture κώλοις; H. Weil more felicitously πνοαῖς or πνόοις.

[2] Verses 426, 427 of Aristophanes' *Acharnians* merely indicate that the drama antedates the year 425.

[3] *Medea*, 1317 *et seq.* This chariot, as represented on an Apulian vase in the Naples Museum, has serpents harnessed to it (*Arch. Zeitung*, 1867, pl. ccxxiv, 1).

[4] We may ask with Alb. Müller (*Bühnenalterthümer*, p. 155, n. 3) whether the *theologeion* was stationary and always visible, or was only brought forward on occasion. The fact that Pollux (*Onom.* iv, 130) describes the *theologeion* between the βροντεῖον and the γέρανος, which cannot have been brought out except as needed, gives weight to the latter hypothesis.

"Ha, high above the incense-breathing house
What god reveals a face that fronts the Sun?
Let us flee, mother, lest we gaze on Gods,
Except in season meet for that great vision."[1]

Finally, this apparition is sometimes preceded by a vague, mysterious noise, a great stir in the air,[2] that announces to anxious mortals the approach of a divine being.

What effect have these interventions on the dénouements of Euripides' dramas? No single answer can be given to this question. In order to solve it we must pass in review, in chronological order so far as that is possible, each of the dramas in which a deity appears toward the close of the play.[3]

In the *Hippolytus* Artemis does not appear for the purpose of solving the complications of the plot. Such solution is no longer needed, for the action of the play is terminated. The catastrophe has occurred; the son of Theseus is about to die, and Artemis, goddess though she is, has no power to avert that misfortune. If she appears,[4] it is to clear Hippolytus of the slanderous accusations made by Phaedra, but particularly to console her young favorite as he lies dying, and to mitigate the bitterness of his last moments. The play might have ended without the intervention of Artemis; it would not have been difficult for a poet so fertile in expedients to find another way of acquainting Theseus with the truth. But what could be more touching than to see near the dying youth the goddess whom he has loved so dearly, and who unwittingly has been the cause of his death, since the mystic love which he conceived for the virgin goddess has brought upon him the bitter wrath of Aphrodite? The presence of Artemis, who fain would weep but may not since she is a goddess, near the dying Hippolytus ennobles and idealizes the emotion we feel as the play ends,

[1] *Ion*, 1549–1552. Cf. *Herac.* 817.

[2] *Andromache*, 1226 *et seq.* Hippolytus, furthermore, recognizes the approach of Artemis by the perfume which pervades the air (1391).

[3] Sometimes deities intervene in the course of the action, as Iris and Lyssa in the *Heracles* (817). Poseidon, in the *Melanippe Bound*, reveals to Boeotus and Aeolus, before the close of the play, that they are his sons and that their mother is a prisoner.

[4] At verse 1282. Invisible to Theseus as to Hippolytus (cf. 86), the goddess no doubt appears ἐπὶ μηχανῆς above the palace, probably on the side where her statue stands.

and gives to that feeling a tone of religious elevation which is not found elsewhere.

In the *Andromache*, performed a short time after 421,[1] it is the goddess Thetis who "traverses the whiteness of the ether"[2] and descends toward the plains of Phthia, the scene of the drama. The marine goddess was chosen in preference to the great deities of Olympus because she was formerly the wife of the hero Peleus. But Peleus has a part in the play; it is his firmness that thwarts the criminal attempt of Menelaus and Hermione, who had planned the death of Andromache and her son; it is he, too, who shortly afterwards is afflicted by a great misfortune: news is brought to him of the death of his grandson Neoptolemus, slain by the Delphians at the instigation of Orestes. The murder of Neoptolemus is the catastrophe of the drama, but this catastrophe leaves the fate of the remaining characters in suspense. We know, it is true, that after the departure of Menelaus and Hermione's removal by Orestes, Andromache and her son, to whom the chief interest attaches, are safe; but now that Neoptolemus is dead, what will become of them without a protector? What will become of the aged Peleus, if he does not die of grief upon losing his grandson, after having lost his son? To satisfy the curiosity of the audience on this point is Thetis' task. She can do it the more easily because she is a goddess, and the gods know the future or determine it at will, and herein lies the difference between them and poor mortals. Thanks to her everything is duly arranged. Andromache with her son is to leave for Epirus, where she will marry Helenus and where Molossus is to be the ancestor of a race of kings. Peleus will go to Delphi to bury Neoptolemus near the Pythian altar, to the disgrace of the Delphians. Upon his return he is to dwell in the palace of Nereus with Thetis, who will make him immortal.[3] Thus the goddess does not cut the knot of the action when she appears above the stage, since the two doubtful issues, the safety of Andromache and the death of Neoptolemus, have already been decided. The effect of her intervention is merely to acquaint us with the events which are to follow upon the plot. But Thetis is not content simply to proclaim the future which her prophetic knowledge as a marine deity might

[1] See p. 131, note 5.

[2] *Androm.* 1228.

[3] *Androm.* 1239 *et seq.*

enable her to unfold; she desires also to aid in its realization and gives exact instructions to Peleus, who is entrusted with carrying them out. She will thus settle, to the satisfaction of the audience, a situation which without her would have remained uncertain.

In the *Suppliants*, likewise, the drama is completed when Athena arrives. But perhaps nowhere is the presence of a deity more readily understood, for the events which have just taken place interest and concern to a certain extent the future of the great city which is consecrated to the goddess. Adrastus has promised the Athenians the lasting gratitude of Argos as a reward for the services they have rendered. By her sudden appearance before Theseus and Adrastus, the goddess constitutes herself a witness of the promise, to which she desires to give the character of a sacred obligation: she ordains that it shall be ratified by an oath. Adrastus must swear:

> —"that never Argive men
> Shall bear against this land[1] array of war;
> If others come, their spear shall bar the way."

The ceremony of the oath is to be accompanied by sacrifices whose minutest details the goddess arranges. Thereupon she turns to the children of the fallen warriors, to those who afterwards will be called the Epigoni, and she declares to them (it is indeed a revelation rather than a command) that some day, when they have reached the age of manhood, they shall go forth and destroy Thebes in order to avenge their fathers.[2] Thus both the hatred of the Argives against the Thebans and their friendship for Athens are placed under the protection of a divine authority. The special character of the *Suppliants*, which is entirely a political play, explains and justifies these previsions of the future, which could not have found a better place than on the lips of the great goddess who was the protectress of Athens.

This same deity appears at the close of the *Ion*, where she was not expected. The scene is Delphi; it would have been proper for the god of Delphi, who is the responsible source of the plot of the drama, to appear at its close to answer for everything and to set matters straight. But Apollo, whose conscience is not easy, did not wish to appear in person, fearing lest he might be publicly re-

[1] Attica. [2] *Suppl.* 1187–1226.

proached for his past frailties.[1] Athena comes in his stead. From her the youthful Ion learns that the secret which his mother has just allowed to escape her is true,—namely, that he is Apollo's son,—and she at the same time informs him that in giving him to Xuthus the god's only intention was to make him a member of a royal house. Xuthus is not his father, but it is advantageous that he should appear to be such and should himself believe it. Creusa, therefore, must let him live on in the pleasant illusion of his false paternity.[2] The goddess, who thus far has undertaken a rather curious task for a virgin goddess,[3] is truer to her rôle when she announces that Ion, placed upon the throne of Athens, is to be the ancestor of an illustrious race. This patriotic glorification of the Ionians made the spectators forget the improbability of Athena's intervention at the close of this drama.

The intervention of the Dioscuri at the close of the *Electra* is more easily explained, for Castor and Pollux are the divine brothers of Clytemnestra, who has just fallen by the sword of Orestes, and the murder of their sister, to which they cannot be indifferent, may well have brought them to Argos. But, not to mention the allusion to affairs in Sicily, what various matters are jumbled together in the speech of the Dioscuri! There we find at the same time the condemnation of the part Apollo has played in forcing a son to kill his mother—the announcement of the burial of Aegisthus by the Argives and of Clytemnestra by the hands of Menelaus and Helen, who are about to arrive—the arrangement for the marriage of Pylades and Electra, who are to take the honest laborer with them—and the flight of Orestes, who is to go to Athens and there stand trial before the Areopagus, and after his acquittal is to settle down in Arcadia, in a town to which he is to give his name.[4] There is nothing that is to happen to any of the people in the play, the survivors as well as the dead, that the Dioscuri do not know. The poet means to have them inform us of everybody's fate.

[1] *Ion*, 1557, 1558. [2] *Ion*, 1560–1605.

[3] The poet himself suggests this criticism. In the prologue of the *Orestes* Electra, alluding to the adultery of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra, says that it is not becoming in a virgin to speak of such things (26, 27).

[4] *Electra*, 1238–1291.

Similarly in the *Helen* the Dioscuri, who are the brothers of Menelaus' wife, use this kinship[1] as a pretext for a second appearance. They have no influence on the main action of the play, since Helen and the husband she has recovered have succeeded in escaping from Egypt and are already at large; they merely obstruct a secondary action which might have been the consequence of the first. They calm the wrath of king Theoclymenus and prevent him from killing his sister, who has been privy to the escape. At the same time they reveal the future, not only what will immediately follow,—the happy voyage of the fugitives, whose ship they will escort across the sea,—but also their destinies for all time to come, even beyond the tomb: Helen is to share divine honors with her brothers, and Menelaus by his union with a daughter of Zeus shall dwell in the Isles of the Blest.[2]

The deity's rôle is somewhat more active at the close of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, which was performed probably between 411 and 409.[3] Hardly has Iphigeneia succeeded in carrying off the statue of Artemis and in embarking with Orestes and Pylades, when a contrary wind drives their ship back to the shore. They seem to be irretrievably lost; Thoas is issuing orders for their arrest. But a divine voice resounds in his ears: "Whither, king Thoas, dost thou send these people in pursuit of the fugitives? Hear my words—Athena's words." And the goddess informs him that Orestes has come to the Taurian land to carry away his sister and transport the image of Artemis to Attica, in obedience to the law of fate and the oracles of Apollo. Though he is a barbarian king, Thoas submits to the commands of the gods of Greece and desists from his purpose. Thus the danger which threatened the young people is dispelled by Athena's intervention. The goddess does more: she settles the religious interests which the removal of the divine statue involves. She advises Orestes, who hears her voice, although he is already far away at sea, upon his arrival in Attica to erect a temple at the port of Halae and there set up the image of Artemis Tauropole. She informs Iphigeneia that she is to have

[1] Let us add that the Dioscuri have been invoked by the chorus (1495) to come to Helen's rescue.

[2] *Helen*, 1642–1679.

[3] Cf. the reasons given by von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Analecta Euripidea*, p. 153.

charge of the goddess' temple upon the heights of Brauron; there she shall some day be buried and there her tomb shall be heaped with honors. She then leaves the scene to accompany the vessel which bears away the son of Agamemnon.[1] If we feel surprise that Athena should intervene to save the priestess of Artemis and to establish her barbarian cult in Greece, we must remember that, according to the tradition of the foundation of the Areopagus, Athena is the divine protectress of Orestes; that the fugitives, when they leave Taurica, turn their faces toward Athens; finally, that the cult to be established is peculiar to the Attic land, in which many gods doubtless were honored, but which was above all the sacred domain of the goddess Athena.

Nowhere was divine intervention more useful, nay absolutely necessary, than in the *Orestes*. This drama would have no dénouement if Apollo did not give it. Before the god appears, everything is still unsettled. Helen, who ought to be immortal, seems to have been killed; Orestes and Electra are still under sentence of death; we do not know whether Hermione, who is in their hands as an hostage, will be murdered or not; Menelaus has not yet made up his mind whether he will save Orestes' life, or allow his daughter to perish. But Apollo appears, and everything is instantly settled. Helen, delivered by the god from the murderer's sword, takes flight toward heaven; she leaves Menelaus behind on the earth, but he is reconciled to this separation the more readily because he is given hope of another wife, better than the first. Orestes—again through the good offices of Apollo—becomes reconciled with the Argives on the one hand and Menelaus on the other, who gives him his daughter Hermione in marriage, while Pylades is to become Electra's husband.[2] Never were quick changes effected more rapidly, never was a situation apparently so inextricable more easily and unexpectedly solved. The god here performs a service which he renders nowhere else,—he relieves from embarrassment a dramatic poet who is searching for a dénouement.

There is nothing like this in the *Bacchanals*, one of the last plays written by Euripides. The appearance of Dionysus in divine form at the close of the tragedy occasions no surprise, for the same god

[1] *Iphig. in Taur.* 1435–1474, 1487–1489.

[2] *Orestes*, 1625–1665, 1682–1690.

has already appeared, at the beginning of the play and during its progress, in human form as a Lydian priest. Moreover, whether absent or present, he is the chief person; more than that, he is the agent who brings all the events to pass and accelerates their course. In order to establish his worship in Boeotia, he inspires the Theban women with Bacchic frenzy and leads them off to the mountain; he overthrows the palace of Pentheus; he sets a trap for the king by inviting him to come with him and surprise the Bacchanals on Mt. Cithaeron; he deranges Agavè's reason till she tears her son's body in pieces. The other characters in the play are not their own masters: they are in the hands of Dionysus, who leads them whither he will. When these terrible events have come to an end, we expect their author. The god appears, not simply to settle Agavè's fate, and that of the aged Cadmus and his wife Harmonia;[1] he comes chiefly to pronounce from the height of the *theologeion* the moral of the drama, to declare to men that Pentheus' terrible fate is the punishment of the impiety which had refused to acknowledge his divine power.[2] Thus the *Bacchanals* is a special kind of tragedy among those we have been citing. Dionysus must not be regarded as a *deus ex machina*, since he is a god who directs the action of the entire play.

These examples enable us to determine with exactness what the *deus ex machina* signifies in the plays of Euripides. It would be a mistake to suppose that the poet made use of this device during his whole life; it would be just as much of a mistake to affirm that when he introduces it he regularly employs it to solve the complications of a confused plot. Euripides made use of the *machine*[3] only in the second half of his career, toward the first years of the Peloponnesian War, and among his extant plays there is only one, the *Orestes*, in which the solution of the action is entirely due to the intervention of a god. There is only one other, the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, in which the god to a certain extent facilitates the dénouement, and even in this the poet might have dispensed with

[1] *Bacch.* 1330 *et seq.*, Wecklein. It is known that there are several lacunae in the text of the words spoken by the god that precede 1330.

[2] *Bacch.* 1345 *et seq.*

[3] We mean the machine which brings in the gods. The poet makes use of this machine for the first time in the *Hippolytus* in 428; then, somewhat later, in the *Andromache*, which, moreover, was not performed at Athens.

her aid. Apart from these two tragedies, to which we must add the *Alcmena* and the *Antiope*[1] from among the lost plays, we may say that the god frequently has nothing to do with the dénouement of Euripides' dramas, in which ordinarily everything is finished when he appears. Sometimes, as in the *Suppliants* and in the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, the god is introduced chiefly in order to give a more august character to a political agreement or to the establishment of a divine cult. But, in a more general way,—and this is exemplified in every case,—the god appears at the close of the drama to proclaim the future, to pronounce the epilogue of the play. Just as at the beginning, the prologue recounts the facts that have preceded the action, so at the close the epilogue announces those which are to follow it. Now while the past may be known to men by tradition, knowledge of the future is denied them: it is therefore necessary that the epilogue should be pronounced by a god.

This was not really a surprise to the Athenian spectators, who recalled the appearance of the goddess Athena toward the close of the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. Only one other example is found in extant plays, except in Euripides' dramas. This is in the *Philoctetes*, in which Sophocles imitated the epilogue of his rival. It appears, therefore, that this dramatic device occurs almost exclusively in Euripides. What did he intend by it? What was his purpose in composing the epilogue, in adding this new and unessential part—as a sort of appendix—to the old and regular parts of tragedy? Perhaps his first purpose was to delight and astonish the audience by bringing a celestial apparition upon the scene. We must not suppose that the common people of that time were more sceptical than they were, or than in the nature of things they could be. The old men of that day still related that the ghost of Theseus had been seen marching at the head of the Athenian troops at Marathon;[2] they told how at Salamis a ship had gone to the shores of Aegina in search of the Aeacidae,[3] and how during

[1] According to Hyginus (*Fab.* 8), Hermes intervened at the close of the *Antiope*, to prevent Amphion and Zethus from killing Lycus, and to command Lycus to give up the throne of Thebes to Amphion. Cf. H. Weil, *Revue des études grecs*, 1889, p. 332. The intervention of Dionysus at the close of the *Phrixus* (Hygin. *Fab.* 2) is merely a probability.

[2] Plut. *Theseus*, xxxv, 11.

[3] Herodotus, viii, 64.

the battle the phantom of a woman—no doubt Athena in person—had roused the ardor of the Greeks in a voice loud enough to be heard by the whole army.[1] Since that time, to be sure, the gods had withdrawn to their Olympus and no longer showed themselves to men nor communicated with them, except by means of their oracles. But their lack of interest in things mundane was only temporary[2] and one might expect to see them appear among men at any moment. For that matter, Euripides, in bringing them upon the tragic stage, is merely true to the traditions of the epics, in which they constantly intervene either to help the heroes or to fight against them. Do not the events which the poet portrays belong to that heroic age when men are not astonished at the gods interfering with their affairs, because gods and men still belong to the same family? The appearance of gods on the stage is therefore in conformity with the legendary past of Greece as established by the poets. Did this spectacle occasion astonishment in Euripides' time? Aeschylus' audience had experienced much stronger emotion when, in the *Psychostasia*, the *theologeion*, like a bit of Olympus unveiled, disclosed Zeus enthroned in his majesty, with Thetis on his right and Aurora on his left, each imploring the master of the gods for the life of her son.[3] But even if the religious impression produced by these celestial apparitions had been weakened by habitude and in consequence of the growth of the critical spirit, it had not perhaps been entirely effaced. Even those for whom this miracle was a pure convention still took pleasure in it, as we take delight in contemplating a fairy scene, though we know what it is. This convention did not displease them.

By means of these apparitions Euripides planned to accomplish something more,—to satisfy his spectators' curiosity as fully and completely as possible, by letting them follow the fortunes of the characters in whom they had been interested beyond the limits of the drama and into the most distant future. To judge from the more frequent occurrence of these epilogues in Euripides' later

[1] *Herod.* viii, 84. Cf. Pausanias, viii, 10, 4.

[2] They were subsequently to say that at the battle of Leuctra Heracles made use of the arms in his temple to take part in the struggle (Xen. *Hist. Gr.* vi, 4, 7).

[3] Plut. *De aud. poet.* 2. Schol. A. *Iliad*, viii, 70. Pollux, *Onom.* iv, 130.

years and from Sophocles' imitation of them, they must have enjoyed the favor of the public. Aristotle, too, who considers the use of the *machine* legitimate "for events external to the drama,"[1] that is, for events which are to follow the action of the play as well as for those which have preceded it, appears by no means to condemn this dramatic invention, which is an artifice and a shift only in the eyes of modern criticism.

II

THE PROLOGUE

Euripides did not keep within the exact limits of the action any better at the beginning of the play than at its close. By means of the epilogue he lets the spectator look into the future; by means of the prologue he carries him back, often very far back, into the past. It is quite true that the action of a drama is always connected with previous events which explain the situation of the *dramatis personae* at the time when it begins, and no tragedy can dispense with an introductory explanation. But this explanation assumes a form in Euripides which it has nowhere else. This form is so peculiar that the word *prologue* when applied to his dramas has a special signification. According to Aristotle's definition,[2] "the *prologos* is that entire part of a tragedy which precedes the *parodos*" (*i. e.* the entrance of the chorus), but when we speak of Euripides we mean by prologue only the monologue which begins his dramas and which in reality is only the first part of the *prologos* properly so named.[3]

This monologue, a sort of introduction[4] designed to acquaint

[1] *Poetics*, xv, p. 1454 b. Aristotle condemns the use of the *machine* in the *Medea* only because it helps in the dénouement of the play.

[2] *Poet.* xii, 1452 b, 19.

[3] The Euripidean prologue has produced a great crop of dissertations in Germany. The following are the most recent, arranged in the order of their publication: Commer, *De prologorum Euripideorum causa ac ratione* (Bonn, 1864); Voss, *De prologis Euripideis* (Halle, 1873); Aspriotis, *De prol. Eur.* (Göttingen, 1876); Klinkenberg, *De Eurip. prol. arte et interpolatione* (Bonn, 1880); von Arnim, *De prol. Eurip. arte et interpol.* (Greiswald, 1882).

[4] Aristotle (*Rhet.* iii, 14), comparing the exordium of a speech with the prologue of a drama, uses the word δδοποίησις.

the audience with what they must know in order to follow the play intelligently, is met with at the beginning of all the dramas which have come down to us under the name of Euripides, with the exception of the *Rhesus*, which is not by him, and of the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, which was perhaps remodelled by the younger Euripides,[1] and in which Agamemnon's monologue appears merely to have been displaced. We may therefore say that the monologue is the poet's unvarying habit, his regular method. Was this method new? In Sophocles' extant dramas the only example of a monologue occurs in the *Trachiniae*. This monologue, moreover, has a dramatic character, — wherein it differs from the majority of those of Euripides, — and the person who speaks it is not alone upon the stage; Deïaneira unburdens her heart and expresses her anxiety before her nurse, who replies to her.[2] Thus Sophocles seems almost always to have preferred the dialogue, which is more vivacious. But in Aeschylus, whose prologues in general assume the most varied forms,[3] the three plays of the *Oresteia* begin with a monologue, which in the *Agamemnon* and the *Choephori* immediately precedes the entrance of the chorus, but in the *Eumenides* is followed by a dialogue. Euripides appears generally to have adopted this last form of prologue. Of sixteen of his tragedies that are preserved in their entirety, there are only four in which it is not found. These are the *Suppliants* and the *Bacchanals*, in which the chant of the chorus immediately follows the opening monologue; and the *Hecuba* and the *Ion*, in which the exposition consists of two successive monologues, the second being a monody; these monologues are independent of one another. In the twelve remaining plays the monologue is regularly followed by a dialogue. But this apparent uniformity conceals more than one variety. Sometimes[4]

[1] H. Weil discusses these questions in his introduction to the *Iphigeneia* (*Sept Tragédies d'Euripide*, 2d ed., p. 309).

[2] Our ignorance of the date of the *Trachiniae* invalidates the supposition that Sophocles desired to imitate Euripides in introducing this monologue.

[3] In the *Persians* and the *Suppliants* the prologue, regarded as a distinct part of the tragedy, does not exist: it is a part of the *parodos*. In the *Seven against Thebes* the exposition consists of a succession of three speeches: that of Eteocles to the Theban people, the report of the messenger, the prayer of the king. The *Prometheus* opens with a dialogue between Cratos and Hephaestus, followed by the Titan's monologue.

[4] In the *Hippolytus*, the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, the *Phoenician Maidens*.

the first part is isolated and has no connection with the dialogue which follows it, since the speaker of the monologue, after completing his task, leaves the stage, not to appear upon it again; sometimes, and most frequently, the monologue and the dialogue are closely connected, a second person entering and beginning conversation with the character who first came upon the scene.

This first person is not always the same. Generally he is one of those who are to take an active part in the plot and who consequently interest us from the start, less through the information they give than on account of the situation in which we know them to be placed. But it also happens that this person has no rôle in the play. In this case we have before us, not a man, but a god, who makes use of the prescience which is one of the privileges of his class to reveal the dénouement of the drama. In the *Alcestis* Apollo is not satisfied with telling us that he has saved Admetus from death by persuading the Parcae to permit another victim to be offered in his stead to the gods of the nether world; that this victim is Admetus' wife, who wished to sacrifice herself for her husband, and that the fatal day has come. He further announces what is going to happen, in most precise terms: Heracles will enjoy Admetus' hospitality, and by force will snatch Alcestis from the embrace of Thanatos, the god of death.[1] In the opening scene of the *Hippolytus* the goddess Aphrodite shows no greater discretion. She might have given us a vague presentiment of the vengeance she expects to wreak on the audacious youth who scorns her. The poet desired that she should tell us more, that she should leave us in ignorance of nothing: from her we learn in advance that Phaedra is to kill herself and that Hippolytus will perish a victim to his father's curse. Likewise in the *Ion* the god Hermes, although he does not enter into all the details of the plot, informs us how the play is going to end and by what device Apollo is to assure a glorious future to Creusa's son. When a god comes forward to speak the prologue, the drama has no further secrets, nor the dénouement any surprise.

Some critics have remarked that the speaker of the prologue in Euripides is chosen "from among those with whom we should

[1] *Alcestis*, 68, 69. This announcement of the dénouement is not found, as elsewhere, in the monologue, but in the dialogue which follows it.

naturally feel sympathy."[1] This observation, which it would be a mistake to generalize, applies evidently neither to the *Hippolytus* nor to the *Bacchanals*, in which the deity of the prologue appears as the implacable and even hateful enemy of the human beings in whom we are to take an interest. But, these two exceptions granted, the correctness of the observation is incontestable. If it is true, it would seem that we ought not to be much bored in listening to the speaker of the prologue. Perhaps the charge of coldness which has been made against Euripides' prologues has been exaggerated. It does not apply with equal force to all his plays, nor even to the greater number of them. Here, as in the majority of questions relating to Euripides' dramas, general statements are likely to be inexact, because what is true of the beginning of the poet's career is not equally true of the middle or end of it, and because we must distinguish times and periods. The prologue of the *Orestes*, which dates from 408, has neither the tone nor the character of the prologue of the *Medea*, which dates from 431.

The Greek critics greatly admired the prologue of the *Medea;* in their opinion it was very effective.[2] It certainly opens with an impassioned swing.[3] The vivid picture the nurse gives of the sufferings of Medea, who has been betrayed in her love, the anxiety she expresses, the presentiments which disturb her, carry us into the very heart of the drama. A dialogue would not have been more spirited than this monologue. The same is true, although in less degree, of the monologue of the *Hippolytus*, where Aphrodite gives vent to her anger while she is explaining the facts. This anger, intensified by the jealousy against which she struggles in vain, impels the goddess to determine upon a revenge which seems odious to us, because it is to fall mercilessly upon two innocent persons. But it is precisely because Aphrodite revolts us that this prologue is not cold. The prologue of Iolaus in the *Children of Heracles*— to follow the probable chronological order—is also dramatic, notwithstanding the sententious remarks with which it opens. And

[1] Von Arnim, in the dissertation already cited.

[2] First argument of the *Medea*, 29, 30, Prinz: ἐπαινεῖται δὲ ἡ εἰσβολὴ διὰ τὸ παθητικῶς ἄγαν ἔχειν.

[3] Three other plays, the *Alcestis*, the *Andromache*, the *Electra*, begin with an exclamation, but this is not followed by a principal sentence. This exclamation expresses a sentiment which is easily interpreted from what follows.

this is due to the fact that we have before our eyes the group of Heracles' sons, whom the aged Iolaus is charged to defend, and that we are already disquieted by the helplessness of these children and this old man, who tremble at the menace of a common danger. Andromache, at the opening of the play which bears her name, needs only to appear and begin to speak to awaken at once the sympathy inspired by the past misfortunes and present agony of this noble woman. We forget the fact that she has come on to inform the audience of the locality of the scene[1] and to acquaint them with the situation; she speaks, and her first words awaken compassion. Thus the prologue of the *Andromache* immediately evokes one of the two great emotions of tragedy. That of the *Suppliants* is less touching: Aethra, however, although she is not menaced herself, excites our lively interest in the Argive mothers present with her on the scene. On hearing the sentiments to which she gives expression, we foresee that she will be able to embolden Theseus to defend both the cause of the suppliants and the honor of Athens.

The prologue of the *Daughters of Troy* is of a different kind: the speaker is Poseidon. But the description which the god gives of the destruction of Troy, of its deserted sacred groves, of its temples reeking with blood, of the wailing of the captive women who are divided among the victors, of Hecuba, who lies upon the ground and weeps, is a stirring picture. And the god himself, who then withdraws, bidding Troy a last farewell, abandoning a land that is dear to him, but which will be able to honor him no longer because it is to become a barren waste, adds to the impression of pathetic desolation which pervades the prologue as well as the entire drama. The prologue of the *Bacchanals* also differs, rousing our apprehension and anxiety. Dionysus, when he appears, does not confine himself to indicating the scene of the drama, to informing us who he is, under the human shape in which he disguises his divinity. He also declares why he has come and how he intends to use his power in establishing his worship among the Thebans, who refuse to acknowledge him. The god is wroth. His soul is angered because he has been denied; he declares that he will have his

[1] In the *Andromache*, exceptionally, the locality of the scene is not made known in the very beginning, but only at verses 16, 17.

revenge. He has already afflicted the sisters of Semele and all the Theban women with delirium and hurried them away to the crags of Mt. Cithaeron; Pentheus likewise is to feel his power. Dionysus does not disclose the dénouement, but from him we learn that a mortal is to engage in a struggle with a god. This is enough; we foresee that the god will prevail and that Pentheus will be punished. Thus the prologue of the *Bacchanals* at once rouses dark presentiments; it is a suitable preface to this sombre drama in which the vengeance of a god is to be wreaked. The prologue of the *Andromeda* moved the spectator in still another way. He must have been deeply affected when he heard the tender young girl, fastened to the cliff, pour forth, at break of day, the anguish of the night which had passed so slowly for her,[1] and her despair at the horrible death which awaited her? The lyrical form which the poet felicitously substituted in this monologue for the iambic trimeter[2] must also have heightened the impression made by her grief-stricken plaints and given them a fuller and more penetrating accent.

There are then in Euripides' dramas several prologues which are not merely a concise and accurate exposition of the chief events of the play, but which, both by their tone and the passion that moves those who speak them, create tragic emotion at the very beginning. It must be admitted that they are not all of this character. Among the prologues that still remain to be considered that of the *Hecuba* deserves a place by itself. No ordinary person comes to instruct the audience about the drama, — not even a god, but a ghost. Among the Greeks the dead were so prominent in the memories and thoughts of the living, and were believed to have so persistent an interest in terrestrial things, that it is not sur-

[1] Aristoph. *Thesmoph.* 1065–1069 (fragm. 114, Nauck).

[2] This is the only prologue in Euripides, so far as we know, which took this form. But this is not a reason for claiming that the scholiast of Aristophanes (on the passage cited) was mistaken in saying that these verses were the opening of the prologue of the play, τοῦ προλόγου . . . εἰσβολή. C. Robert (*Arch. Zeitung*, 1878, p. 18) assumes after Hartung (*Eurip. restit.* vol. ii, p. 344) that the opening monologue was spoken, in the ordinary form, by the nymph Echo, and that Andromeda's monody came afterwards; the verses in question, he thinks, were merely the beginning of that monody. It is difficult thus to interpret the word εἰσβολή, for in one of the Greek arguments of the *Medea* this word designates, beyond possible doubt, the very first verses of the play.

prising that the tragic poets should have thought of evoking them occasionally,[1] in order to introduce them into the plot of their plays. These shades, moreover, had a virtue that was appreciated by a dramatic poet: they had the gift of prescience. In the *Persians* the ghost of Darius, after a long conversation with the chorus, predicts the disaster at Plataea. In Sophocles' *Polyxena* the shade of Achilles appears to the Greeks, who are about to set sail, and tells them of the storms that threaten them and of the death that awaits their chief.[2] Ghosts would seem to be specially fitted to speak the prologue because they preserve the memory of the past and are in possession of the secrets of the future. For this reason Euripides introduces the shade of Polydorus at the opening of the *Hecuba*. This shade does not know everything, or at least does not say everything—it reveals only the first catastrophe of the drama. The poet wished to keep the audience in expectation of the second. But this spectre must have produced an effect of surprise, if not consternation, by its unannounced appearance at the very beginning of the play. This was a bold innovation of which the Attic drama affords us no other example.

Prologues which have neither this merit of originality nor these dramatic qualities are quite numerous. Though their length has been justly criticised, we must grant that this fault is sometimes excusable. How could Hermes have explained the subject of the *Ion* in a few words? Had he not recalled at great length the facts that preceded the plot, had he not in advance indicated the end towards which that plot tended, we should perhaps have been lost in the strands of an intrigue of more than ordinary complexity. Furthermore it cannot have displeased the Athenians to hear the recital of a legend which took them back to the time of Erechtheus, and had for its scene Athens and the very rock of the Acropolis on whose slope the theatre of Dionysus stood. Hermes' monologue, though it appears long to us, perhaps did not appear so

[1] Clytemnestra comes upon the scene, after her death, to excite the wrath of the Eumenides against Orestes (*Eum.* 94 *et seq.*).

[2] There is no doubt that this apparition did not appear till the close of the tragedy. Longinus (*On the Sublime*, xv, 7) formally declares that Achilles appeared above his tomb just as the Greeks were about to depart (κατὰ τὸν ἀπόπλουν . . . προφαινομένου τοῖς ἀναγομένοις). Cf. the other reasons given by H. Weil, in his Introduction to the *Hecuba* (*Sept Trag. d'Eurip.*, 2d ed., p. 204).

to Euripides' audience. Elsewhere, too, the amplification of the prologue was necessary. The poet could not modify traditions and correct legends at will, in the interest of his drama, without giving notice of such changes to an audience who knew their legendary history and would have been perplexed had they not been warned. For example, could they ever have divined that Electra, the daughter of a king, had become the wife of a peasant? This peasant does well, therefore, to present himself at the outset, and the explanations he gives—they are somewhat long, as suits the style of a man of the people—about his marriage and the circumstances that attended it are not superfluous for the proper understanding of what is to follow. But we may ask what need there was in the *Phoenician Maidens* to repeat in the prologue the hackneyed legend of Oedipus. Surely this ancient story was known to everybody, and appears tedious even on the lips of Iocasta, however plausible it may be that she should recall her past misfortunes. She includes, however, some new details. What we did not know before, and here learn, is that Oedipus, who in Sophocles dies in exile near Athens in advance of his sons, is still alive and within the walls of his Theban palace; that Iocasta also is alive and that she will attempt the reconciliation of her sons; furthermore, that Eteocles unjustly retains the throne. The poet desires us to ignore current traditions and concede him so much; he needs this concession in order to develop the plot of his drama, and the prologue —we could wish it were shorter—is intended to forestall all surprises. What stupefaction the performance of the *Helen* would have produced, had not Euripides given to this tragedy also an explanatory prologue as introduction! The Athenians, who knew Homer even better than Stesichorus, would not have understood the play at all. Helen a model of purity, Menelaus' wife the type of married fidelity—what a contradiction of the Homeric legend! What a subversion of all current ideas on this subject! That is not all: a double Helen, phantom and real person at the same time—what a bizarre notion! The poet must persuade his audience to accept these extraordinary assumptions. He had also to introduce to them two persons with whom they were not acquainted, whose names no doubt were hardly known to them, an Egyptian king Theoclymenus, and his sister Theonoe. Never had Euripides de-

manded so much of the good nature of his audience; never, consequently, had a prologue been so extremely necessary.

These are mitigating considerations, but they do not excuse the tediousness of several of these prologues. A few of them are short, —for example, that of the *Alcestis*, where about twenty-five verses suffice for a clear and simple[1] exposition of the facts,—but there are others that are interminable, as that of the *Phoenician Maidens*, and the majority of those which Euripides wrote toward the end of his life. The reason for this must not be sought in the poet's philosophy. We find sententious reflections[2] only in the prologues of the *Children of Heracles*, the *Orestes* and the *Stheneboea*;[3] and even these are few and commonplace. Euripides did not make use of the new kind of exposition he had invented as a means for expressing freely his ideas[4] and personal views; it never served him as a *parabasis*. But while the Euripidean prologues are very rarely rendered frigid by philosophical reflections, several of them become tiresome because of the length to which they are developed, and the scrupulous care, carried almost to the point of pedantry, with which the poet enters into all the details of a past which has any bearing whether immediate or remote—sometimes very remote—on the action of the drama. This excessive precision is betrayed especially in the abuse of genealogies. The speaker of the prologue should certainly inform us who he is when he comes upon the stage; his name is not written upon his mask and he has not always attributes, like those of Hermes or Heracles, which make him recognizable at once. But when he has once mentioned his name,[5] if he belongs to one of those families whose history even

[1] Why does one of the grammarians to whom we owe the arguments of the *Alcestis* accuse Apollo of talking after the manner of a rhetorician (προλογίζει ῥητορικῶς)? This reproach no doubt was made against Euripides' prologues in general; it is not justified in this particular case.

[2] There were a few also in the prologue of the *Philoctetes*. But Dio Chrysostom (*Orat.* 52, 11) informs us that they were "political reflections."

[3] Cited by Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1217. Cf. schol. 1219; Nauck, fragm. 661.

[4] We find but a single trace of this in the prologues, in verse 28 of the *Orestes*, where Electra casually blames Apollo for having commanded a son to kill his mother.

[5] Generally—to be precise, in eleven of the sixteen tragedies—the speaker of the prologue tells his name in the very first sentence he utters. But in the *Children of Heracles* Iolaus, whose identity may be inferred, does not mention his name until verse 30; Helen, in the play of that name, does not make

children knew by heart, what need is there to go back to the origin of his race, and display for our inspection all the links in the chain of his ancestors? Perhaps it is well to know that Theoclymenus is descended from Proteus, because Proteus is known and Theoclymenus is not; but does not the poet assume great ignorance or else great patience on the part of his audience when he enumerates without a single omission all the ancestors and other relatives of Oedipus or Agamemnon? But Iocasta takes that trouble in the prologue of the *Phoenician Maidens*, and Electra also in the prologue of the *Orestes*. We must quote a passage from the latter, as an example of the extremes to which the poet goes:

> "He[1] begat Pelops; born to him was Atreus
> For whom with her doom-threads Fate twined a strand
> Of strife against Thyestes, yea, his brother;—
> Why must I tell o'er things unspeakable?
> Atreus for their sire's feasting slew his sons.
> Of Atreus—what befell between I tell not—
> Famed Agamemnon sprang,—if *this* be fame,—
> And Menelaus, of Cretan Aeropê.
> And Menelaus wedded Helen, loathed
> Of heaven, the while King Agamemnon won
> Clytemnestra's couch, to Hellenes memorable.
> To him were daughters three, Chrysothemis,
> Iphigeneia, Electra, and a son
> Orestes, of one impious mother born."[2]

The poet takes care to call our attention to the fact that he is abridging, that he is giving a résumé, and that Electra does not say everything; nevertheless Electra says too much. Who on the benches of the theatre of Dionysus did not know the elementary facts of that ancient story? Who did not know at the opening of the *Phoenician Maidens*, even before Iocasta had spoken, that Oedipus' father was Laius, and that Laius, through Labdacus, was descended from Cadmus?[3] The elaboration of superfluous genealogies offends us also in the prologues of the *Heracles*, *Ion* and

herself known until verses 17–22; the peasant in the *Electra* until verses 34–36. In the *Orestes* Electra does not give her name until verse 23. These examples show that the poet took pains to vary the form of his prologues in order to avoid the reproach of monotony.

[1] Tantalus.

[2] *Orestes*, 11–24.

[3] *Phoenician Maidens*, 5–9.

Iphigeneia in Taurica.[1] We are surprised that the audience should not have shown impatience in listening to them. But the monotony of this mannerism, which grew worse and worse, must have been noticed by many. It was a source of delight to Aristophanes, who found in it material for piquant parodies,[2] and without scruple or flagrant injustice made sport of it. What served his purpose, however, in amusing the audience was not so much the genealogies with which Euripides' prologues are overloaded—he merely suggests that criticism in the *Frogs*—as their style, especially the form of their first period. This period was often so composed that it began with a participial construction, its first part being regularly followed, in the second or third verse, by a penthemimeral caesura; this gave Aristophanes the chance to add at this point to the tragic phrase which was thus cut short a comic refrain, ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν, "lost his bottle of oil," whose triviality must have provoked bursts of hilarious laughter.[3] Was this initial period, which ordinarily proceeds with a sort of majesty, and with a free and ample movement,[4] as clumsily constructed and did it end as badly as Aristophanes gives us to understand? We are less struck by this fault, which is intentionally exaggerated by the comic poet, than the Greeks may have been, who were so sensitive to all the niceties of their language. But this kind of criticism appears to have produced a very vivid impression upon them. When the younger Euripides superintended the revival of several of his father's tragedies, he thought it prudent to change the form of the prologues[5] which Aristophanes had ridiculed.

1 We must add the prologues of the *Meleager* (Nauck, fragm. 515) and *Phrixus* (fragm. 819), of which, however, we have fragments only.

2 Before the *Frogs* he had parodied in the *Gerytades* and in the *Aeolosicon* the first verses of the prologue of the *Hecuba* (Athen. iii, p. 112 e; xii, p. 551 b).

3 *Frogs*, 1208–1241. This criticism is directed against the prologues of the *Archelaus*, the *Hypsipyle*, the *Stheneboea*, the *Phrixus*, the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, the *Meleager*. Of *Melanippe the Philosopher* only the first verse is quoted (1244) because there was no participle in the second, but an indicative, and this made the addition of the refrain impossible.

4 This period contains six verses in the *Hippolytus*, seven in the *Suppliants* and *Electra*, nine in the *Hecuba*, *Iphigeneia in Taurica* and the *Phoenician Maidens*. The first period of the *Andromache* contains no less than fifteen verses, with a single break in the seventh verse.

5 This is no doubt merely an hypothesis, but a very probable hypothesis, developed by Fritzsche, page 366 of his edition of the *Frogs*. It explains how there

Shall we say that these various imperfections must not always be ascribed to the poet himself? No doubt the actors felt little hesitation in changing certain dramas for the benefit of their rôles; so that about half a century after Euripides' death a decree of the Athenian people had to be passed — at the suggestion of the orator Lycurgus — designed to protect the texts of the three great tragic poets against their indiscreet revisions.[1] But the actors would have had no interest in lengthening the prologues of Euripides by inserting details of their own composition, unless the public had acquired a taste for such extended accounts. This, however, is very improbable, and furthermore is without proof. It is easier to accuse the grammarians and the copyists and to attempt to convict them of interpolating. But how shall we proceed? Where shall we stop when we have once started upon this path of suspicion? What rules shall we adopt in deciding what belongs to Euripides and what does not? If we attempt to cut out of these prologues everything that surprises us, everything that appears superfluous to our exigent modern taste,[2] what will remain of them? The occasional passages in which interpolation is so plainly evident that all agree upon it are rare. Perhaps, therefore, it is better — even at the risk of being sometimes misled — to accept these prologues just as they have come down to us, than to run the risk of losing a part of that which is surely Euripidean by serious mutilations made arbitrarily.

To whatever operation we subject the text of the prologues, however we prune and trim them, they nevertheless preserve, along with their chief faults, their essential character, — that of a very special form of exposition. This is not an experiment, nor an iso-

happen to be two different prologues for the *Archelaus* (schol. *Frogs*, 1206; Plut. *Mor.* p. 837 e), for the *Phrixus* (schol. *Frogs*, 1225; fragm. of Tzetzes published by Keil, *Rhein. Mus., N. F.*, vol. vi, p. 616) and for the *Meleager* (Aristotle, *Rhet.* iii, 9, who quotes its first verse differently from Aristophanes). Fritzsche points out that the prologue of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica* begins in the manuscripts of Euripides as it does in Aristophanes, and this is no doubt due to the fact that the play was not revived after the poet's death, or was revived many years after the performance of the *Frogs*.

[1] *Lives of the Ten Orators*, vii, 11 (Plut. *Mor.* p. 841 f).

[2] This is what Klinkenberg has done in his dissertation, already cited, on the prologues of Euripides and their interpolation. H. von Arnim, dealing with the same subject, is more conservative in his corrections.

lated effort; on the contrary, the poet adopted it deliberately and remained true to it, and consequently he must have chosen it for definite reasons. Is the adoption of this form a conscious return to the methods of primitive art? Thespis, in his day, when the drama under his hand emerged from the lyrical elements in which it lay hidden, had conceived the prologue[1] as the necessary explanation of his intentions to the spectators of his innovations. But the age of childish wonder and naïve ignorance was long past for the audience in the Athenian theatre; this audience had seen many things since Thespis, and Euripides had not the same reasons for wishing to give them guidance. As we have said, he was obliged to advise them of the changes he made in the traditions of heroic legend; but such changes are not found in all his dramas, while the prologue occurs in them all. These changes are therefore not a sufficient explanation of his choice of this kind of exposition. Must we believe, as several critics[2] suppose, that Euripides merely wished to save himself trouble, in abandoning the form of the dialogue, which was more vivacious but harder to manage, and that, if he had tried it, he would not have succeeded with it? What reason have we to believe that he was so mindful of his ease, or to impute such incapacity to a man who elsewhere shows himself so skilful in the art of constructing dialogue? Or may it be that because the prologue—in the restricted sense of the word—was an external sign by which a tragedy of Euripides was at once recognizable, he wished thereby to distinguish his plays from those of his rivals in dramatic art? Although the poet's intentions are not apparent, we prefer to believe that he was swayed by a different feeling. Did he not simply try to give to one of the constituent parts of tragedy a new form, which doubtless seemed to him more appropriate for its purpose? Desiring that the prologue should be merely an exposition and that it should have a character of its own, he suppresses the dialogue, which is a preliminary sketch of the characters and their sentiments, at the beginning of the play; as any emotion might distract the mind from what it is important that it should learn, he avoids expression of feel-

[1] Arist. ap. Themist. *Orat.* xxvi, p. 382, Dindorf.

[2] Especially Otfried Müller, vol. i, p. 478, in Donaldson's English translation, and Bergk, *Griech. Literaturgeschichte*, vol. iii, p. 594.

ing provisionally and reserves it for the scenes that follow. In a word he isolates the prologue from the beginning of the plot and generally reduces it to nothing more than a simple indication of the subject. Need we look for any other explanation of this fact than his desire to secure the completest possible understanding of his treatment of the subject, by making all the circumstances of the drama perfectly clear[1] in advance? This attention to clearness, this search for precision which at times becomes fastidious, have their origin apparently in an excess of the methodical spirit.[2] When Euripides explains calmly and concisely, through the mouth of an actor, the subject he is about to deal with, he is like the philosophers with whom he used to associate, who, before entering upon the development and discussion of a question, began by recalling its antecedents and by fixing its limits, who frequently even determined in the presence of their hearers the direction which their thought was going to take and fixed its conclusion. The conclusion of a drama—that is, its dénouement—is not always indicated in Euripides, but sometimes it is, when a god appears in the prologue. There is no reason to regret this device; it gave the poet a chance occasionally to depart from the regular practice of the drama, by voluntarily depriving himself of the means which serve to awaken the expectation of the audience and to keep it in suspense. The interest of his dramas cannot have suffered thereby. What does it matter indeed that the spectators know everything in advance, so long as the actors know nothing? It is their ignorance and not ours, it is their emotions at events which they alone have not foreseen, which produce dramatic effects through the sympathy established between them and us.

Euripides may recall distant memories of Thespis; still the expository monologue in his tragedies was a real innovation in the domain of art. We have no right to declare, putting our faith in Aristophanes' pleasantries, that the poet failed in his attempt. On the contrary his perseverance seems to indicate that his prologues were received favorably by the public. Moreover they are,

[1] In the *Frogs*, 1119 *et seq.*, Euripides, when criticising Aeschylus' prologues for lack of clearness (ἀσαφὴς γὰρ ἦν ἐν τῇ φράσει τῶν πραγμάτων), indirectly praises his own.

[2] Cf. *Frogs*, 945.

as we have seen, far from being all alike; they were not all indiscriminately cast in the same mould. Therefore they do not all deserve the same criticism nor the severity of the general and too summary condemnation which is ordinarily pronounced against them.

CHAPTER V

THE RÔLE OF THE CHORUS

I

MOVEMENT OF THE CHORUS FROM THE STAGE TO THE ORCHESTRA AND FROM THE ORCHESTRA TO THE STAGE THE "EPIPARODOS" IN EURIPIDES

A CERTAIN view on the part played by the chorus in the tragedies of Euripides prevails widely; it is already venerable and seems likely to persist. This view, which has its source in three words of a doubtful passage in Aristotle,[1] may be stated as follows: "The chorus, intimately connected by Aeschylus and Sophocles with the plot of the tragedy, is detached from it in Euripides; its songs, which in Aeschylus and Sophocles are integral parts of the drama whose emotions they express, are generally only intercalated passages in Euripides, bits of veneer, musical interludes." These are certainly convenient formulae for one who wishes quickly and roughly to distinguish Euripides from his rivals. But are they correct and do they agree with the actual facts? This question is worth the trouble of investigation, although to oppose accepted views and venture to revise judgments which have in their favor the respectability given by time and the

[1] *Poetics*, xviii, at the end. The following is the passage which we must reproduce here, however well known: "The chorus too should be regarded as one of the actors; it should be an intimate part of the whole, and share in the action, *in the manner not of Euripides, but of Sophocles* (συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ)."

Hartung (*Eurip. rest.* vol. ii, p. 370) found in these last words a criticism of Euripides so little justified, and in particular a contrast of Sophocles with Euripides so singular, that he did not hesitate to assume a corruption and to correct the passage thus: ὡς παρ' Εὐριπίδῃ ἢ ὡς παρὰ Σοφοκλεῖ, "as in Euripides and in Sophocles." It seemed to him that the traditional text was badly connected with the sentence that follows, which begins: "As for the other poets, their choral songs pertain as little to the subject of the piece as to that of any other tragedy." But Aristotle's thought is intelligible without changing the text of the MSS. Does he not here say that in Sophocles the chorus has a well-determined rôle, that this rôle is less clear in Euripides, and that in the later poets it disappears? There is a diminishing progression in the development of the thought in these two sentences, and not a contradiction. The alteration of the text, therefore, while it is possible (cf. above, μὴ ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος, probably an interpolation), is not certain.

prestige of almost universal agreement always seems to become a critic ill.

Let us, at the outset, in discussing Euripides' chorus, eliminate the expression "lyrical interludes"—an offensive expression, if we consider that Aristotle, in the very sentence which follows the one which is misinterpreted, attributes the first introduction of such interludes to Agathon,[1] and that on this point he distinctly contrasts Euripides as well as Sophocles with the poets who came after them. The *embolima*, so Aristotle says, are not the invention of Euripides, but of Agathon.

It is important also to dispel at the outset of this study a confusion of ideas which prevails. The critics say: "The songs of the chorus in Euripides are connected with the plot only by a very thin thread;" and in a number of cases that is true. But why consider only the *stasima* and a certain number of *parodoi* as songs of the chorus? Are there not also in Euripides' plays *commoi*, that is, lyrical dialogues in which the chorus converses with the characters on the stage? Do we not also find in his plays semi-choruses and *parodoi* which have the same form? And have not these parts, from the fact that they are in dialogue form, the closest possible connection with the drama? Why leave them out? It is therefore essential not to confuse *the choruses*—that is, the ensemble passages sung by the united voices of all the members of the chorus—with *the chorus*, by which I mean the members of the chorus during their entire activity, whether forming a single group, or divided into several groups, or separated, or finally represented by their leader, the corypheus. These are the various kinds of participation in the drama by the members of the chorus which it is well to keep distinct and to examine.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the tragic chorus—after the entering procession of the *parodos*—stood still in the orchestra on the spot which was assigned to it. Besides its usual evolutions and the dances which it performed on the platform,[2] it executed several other kinds of movements, prompted by the action

[1] The following is the end of the sentence quoted above: "They are, therefore, sung as mere interludes (ἐμβόλιμα), a practice first begun by Agathon."

[2] On the platform in the orchestra assigned to the chorus, see M. Albert Müller, *Griechische Bühnenalterthümer*, p. 129.

of the drama. These movements, which refreshed the eye and lent greater life to the performance, are not wanting in Euripides any more than in his contemporary Sophocles, and in Aeschylus, his predecessor. The latter had several times altered the usual route of the chorus, by introducing it directly upon the stage.[1] Sophocles imitated his example in his *Oedipus at Colonus*. Euripides, before Sophocles, had done the same thing in his *Suppliants*, in which the Argive women, who compose the chorus, remain for a long time grouped with the actors and only pass to their regular place as they are about to sing the first *stasimon*. And this arrangement was not designed simply to furnish the spectacle of a procession. Had these women been placed in the orchestra from the beginning of the play, they would have been too far away from the mother of Theseus, whose protection they needed to gain, and whose heart they touched precisely because they were near her, and gathered weeping closely about her and embraced her knees.[2] Sometimes the members of the chorus execute the inverse movement in Euripides: from the orchestra they mount[3] upon the stage; but they do this only rarely, as we shall see,—at such times as they temporarily take part in the action. When they have not sufficient courage for this, the terror with which certain tragic situations inspire them sometimes causes them to leave their place, but not the enclosure of the theatre. In Aeschylus' *Choephori* the chorus retires and hides itself, in order not to be present at the horrible scene that is about to take place between Orestes and Clytemnestra. In Euripides, when Heracles, after the access of madness in which he has murdered his sons, wakes from sleep and casts his eyes about him, he finds nobody to whom to speak. His father Amphitryon has prudently disappeared; the chorus, which is no less prudent, has retired. Where has it gone? It has descended the steps of the platform on which it stood, and taken up its position at the foot of the *hyposkenion*, the front wall of the entire

[1] *Sept.* 95 and 265. *Prometheus*, 129 and 279. Likewise in the *Choephori*, 10, 22, and the *Eumenides*, 185, where the chorus proceeds from the temple into the orchestra.

[2] *Suppl.* 42–44.

[3] We are not yet convinced of the correctness of a recent theory, according to which the chorus was on the same level as the actors.

scene, where it completely escapes Heracles' eyes.[1]

This was merely an ingenious device, meant perhaps to provoke a smile at the cowardice of the chorus. More serious reasons demand that in certain cases the chorus shall leave the orchestra, not to return to it until somewhat later. Aeschylus, in his *Eumenides*, and Sophocles, in his *Ajax*, had both made use of this temporary withdrawal of the chorus and of the *epiparodos*, in order to provide for a change of scene, which otherwise would have been impossible. Euripides made use of the same means, not to remove the action to another place, but to prepare for dramatic effects which the presence of the chorus would have rendered difficult. He appears to distrust this bothersome witness, and that the chorus may not be led to commit indiscretions, he removes it, when this becomes necessary or when it is to be kept in ignorance. In the *Alcestis* the members of the chorus leave the orchestra to follow the funeral procession of Admetus' wife and do not return until after the end of the ceremony.[2] They thus fulfil, it is true, a duty that is natural enough, since they escort to her last resting-place the woman who in their eyes is the best of mistresses and the noblest of women. But the poet has other reasons as well for sending them to the funeral: in the interval he introduces the scene between Heracles and the attendant, in which the hero announces that he will go and fight with Thanatos for his victim. This extraordinary resolution may be made known to the audience with perfect propriety, but it must remain unknown to Admetus, and this can be accomplished only by the withdrawal of the chorus, or by its keeping silent. The poet despaired of inducing it to keep Heracles' secret, and removed it from the orchestra, that nothing might prevent the final surprise at the theatrical effect which terminates the drama.

There are similar reasons for the *epiparodos* of the chorus in the *Helen*. The servants accompany their mistress into the palace and subsequently return with her,[3] because they must not be present when Menelaus arrives; the recognition between wife and husband must not occur suddenly, and the latter would be less

[1] *Heracles*, 1086, 1087. The chorus does not come back to its place before verse 1110.

[2] *Alcestis*, 746, 861 *et seq.*

[3] *Helen*, 327, 515 *et seq.*

well prepared by the chorus for the marvellous experience that awaits him than by the old slave who opens the palace door for him. The *Phaethon* furnished another example of this temporary withdrawal of the chorus. Euripides, then, like the other tragic poets, made use of the *epiparodos* several times; but he employed this device after his own fashion, not from urgent necessity, but simply because he found it convenient in the economy of his plays.

The departure of the members of the chorus in the course of the action occurs only exceptionally in Greek plays. But the interest which they take in the drama sometimes, especially in Euripides, impels them to draw so near to the actors that some scholars now maintain that the chorus was on the same level with the actors. The members of the chorus in the *Orestes* enter just after the unfortunate man has fallen into the deep sleep which usually follows his attacks of madness. Electra is watching by his side. As she begs them to tread lightly and to talk low,—"as softly as the murmuring of a reed,"—they are obliged, in order to make themselves heard and to hear, to take their position quite close to Electra, and consequently to the couch of Orestes, so that Electra, fearing lest her brother may be wakened by the noise, twice entreats them to go away.[1] Where are they, then, if not at the very edge of the stage, having left their usual place?[2]

The members of the chorus very often declare themselves ready to go beyond the edge of the stage, even if they do not actually do this. When Polymestor, whose eyes Hecuba and the Trojan women have put out, roars in his terrible pain and threatens to destroy everything, the women of the chorus are on the point of rushing to the help of their mistress, but they have not time, for she promptly reappears.[3] The women of the chorus in the *Andromache* also respond too late to the urgent request of the nurse that they shall enter the palace and save the life of Hermione, who, to be sure, does not kill herself.[4] In the *Hippolytus*, when the nurse summons aid for Phaedra, who has just hanged herself, and

[1] *Orestes*, 147–151, 170–172, 183–186. Cf. 1251, 1252, 1258–1260.

[2] We might be tempted to imagine a similar situation in the *Children of Heracles* (307–309). But Arnoldt (*Chorische Technik des Euripides*, p. 63) has shown, after Schönborn, that Iolaus' words are addressed not to the members of the chorus, but to Demophon, Acamas, his brother, and those about them.

[3] *Hecuba*, 1042 *et seq.*

[4] *Androm.* 817 *et seq.*

in the *Medea*, when the cries of the children whom their mother is slaying are heard, the chorus doubtless cannot avert, and ought not to avert, the catastrophe, which is necessary. But though it actually does nothing, but in its anxiety only resolves and hesitates, it at least goes forward and is on the point of acting,[1] and this disposition—though it is entirely conventional—is dramatic in so far as it satisfies the demands of probability. Once, and once only, the chorus actually interferes, in the person of its leader. Just as Theoclymenus is about to take vengeance on his sister, who has abetted the escape of Menelaus and Helen, the corypheus, followed perhaps by some of the women, mounts the stage, blocks the king's way, holds him by his garments[2] and prevents him from committing a futile murder. This scene is so like a similar situation in the *Oedipus at Colonus*[3] as to tempt us to think that Euripides furnished Sophocles with its original. However this may be, Euripides differs neither from Sophocles nor from Aeschylus, so far as the movements executed by the chorus are concerned, whether in leaving or returning to the theatre, or within the enclosure of the orchestra and in the immediate vicinity of the stage, whither it is frequently called when the drama demands its presence or compels its sympathy.

II

ANALYSIS OF THE SONGS AND SPOKEN UTTERANCES OF THE CHORUS IN THEIR RELATION TO THE ACTION

Aristotle desires that the tragic chorus shall have a rôle, and perhaps he reproaches Euripides for not having observed this law sufficiently. Certainly none of our poet's choruses recalls that of the *Eumenides*, which is unique in its kind in the whole range of the Greek drama. But is there not at least one among his plays which affords an example of a chorus connected with the action as intimately as can be imagined? This play is the *Suppliants*. The Argive women, who with their handmaidens constitute the group composing its chorus—these mothers that come to implore the

[1] *Hippol.* 782–785. *Med.* 1275, 1276.

[2] *Helen*, 1627 *et seq.*

[3] *Oedipus at Colonus*, 856 *et seq.*

aid of Athens against the Thebans, who have denied them the remains of their sons—affect us not simply because they are mothers; we may say that they are the single reason for the drama, since it centres entirely about them. For them Theseus gives battle; for them the victory is won; for them too at the close the long funeral procession enters amid their sobs and their wailing. The other characters, Adrastus, Theseus, Aethra (Theseus' mother), speak and act only in the interests of these women, and combine to such an extent to serve them that they are not forgotten for a moment, but remain constantly in the foreground and become in a manner the principal character through the continuous interest of which they are the object. Their songs, which begin with a mournful supplication and end with a lamentation in which their sorrows are echoed again and again, flow from a single source. Immersed in their grief, absorbed in regret for their dead, from which neither legendary reminiscences nor philosophical reflections distract them, they are entirely engrossed in their mourning; and this unity of sentiment lends a character to the *Suppliants* which remains constant notwithstanding the variety of ways in which it is expressed. We could not conceive—and there is not another example of just this sort of drama, even in Sophocles—a chorus which complies better with Aristotle's requirement: "The chorus must be one of the characters of the play."

Let us compare the *Andromache* with the *Suppliants:* the contrast will be striking.

How could the chorus of the *Andromache* take a lively interest in what is going on? Neither its own fate nor that of any of its kin is at stake. In the eyes of these Thessalian women, Andromache is a barbarian, a foreigner. The misfortunes of this foreigner may excite their pity without rendering it an active feeling and leading them to express a devotion which might be dangerous, for Hermione is not an easy mistress, and Menelaus, a true Spartan, has not a gentle spirit. If therefore the chorus allows itself to be affected by the anguish of Andromache, it must not let the fact that it is moved be too evident. It must be so timid in its sympathies that the merest nothing will disperse them. For this reason it often shuns the issue and flies from the present, which is too near, to go back to the distant past or to rush into the domain of gen-

eralities; the slightest pretext suffices for this. If the chorus, although not devoted to Andromache, ventured to avow its feelings, it would express anxiety in the first *stasimon* about Hermione's recent threats. What do we find in place of what we expect? A brilliant and ingenious account of the origin of the Trojan War.[1] Had Paris not been called upon to decide among the three goddesses, had the son of Priam been put to death in his infancy, as the prophetess Cassandra wished, Greece would not have lost so many of her sons and Andromache would still be dwelling in the palace of the Trojan kings! This is no doubt true, but it does not help nor console Andromache. Somewhat later, Menelaus' perfidy, odious in everybody's eyes whether Greek or barbarian, ought, it would seem, to rouse the indignation of the women of Phthia. But Menelaus is a prince and must be dealt with cautiously. The chorus therefore contents itself with the remark that it is not well for a man to have two wives, and children by two wives; and proceeds from this to let itself be drawn into demonstrating the disadvantages of duality in all things. Two tyrants are not so good as one in the management of a state; two rival poets are sure to quarrel; if there are two pilots at the helm of a vessel, the vessel sails badly, etc. When this ingenious discourse finally comes to an end,[2] we are quite astonished to observe the road we have traversed in following it,—far indeed from Andromache.

The chorus shows itself equally prudent in the song which follows the quarrel between Peleus and Menelaus;[3] it is so prudent, indeed, that we ask ourselves to whom it can be alluding in the first strophe, where the advantages of nobility are extolled. It is true that subsequently it grows bold enough to imply in well-disguised words that it does not like Menelaus' violence and does approve Peleus' conduct. But even here we have to interpret its meaning, for, while it exalts Peleus, what it really extols in him is not his courageous interference in the present crisis, but his heroic exploits in times gone by.

The fourth *stasimon* does not differ from the other three. The threats which Orestes, as he carried off Hermione, has just uttered against Neoptolemus might well make the chorus anxious about

[1] *Androm.* 274–308. [2] *Androm.* 464–493.

[3] This is the third *stasimon* of the *Andromache*, 766–801.

Hermione's husband's fate. But it is not disturbed: Hermione's false position toward her husband appears to it to be only one of the results, among many others, of the Trojan War, which has overturned everything, both in the world at large and in families. In this wise it quiets itself and deplores, in a new fashion, the countless calamities of that fatal war.[1] A little later, relieved of the terror inspired by Menelaus and his daughter, it no longer fears to sympathize with the grief of Peleus, who is weeping by the side of Neoptolemus' dead body. But such temerity is quite new. Up to this time the chorus has carried its reserve almost to the point of indifference; it has taken no interest, or has made us believe that it took no interest, in what happened before its eyes.

Here then we have two tragedies, the *Suppliants* and the *Andromache*, in which the choruses resemble one another as little as possible; in the one the chorus is an intimate part of the drama, and is its only *raison d'être;* in the other it is a quite impassive and often inattentive spectator of the action. He who took into account now one, now the other of these two plays would reach diametrically opposed conclusions on the question under discussion, since the former affords the weight of as much evidence against the commonly accepted opinion as the latter affords for it. Fortunately a sufficient number of other tragedies by Euripides have survived to enable us to escape this alternative.

The contrast afforded by the choruses of the *Andromache* and the *Suppliants* cannot be explained by chronological considerations, since, although the exact dates of these two plays are not known, we are at least sure that they were not far apart. In view, however, of the fact that various periods are distinguishable in Euripides' career, and that the poet had various styles, may we not suppose that the rôle of the chorus in his dramas changed in the course of years and that the bond connecting chorus and plot, which was very close at the outset, became very loose only by degrees? In order to determine the value of this hypothesis, it will suffice to compare his earliest extant tragedy with the latest that he wrote,—those which were performed after his death.

The very vivid interest taken by the members of the chorus of

[1] *Andromache*, 1009–1046.

the *Alcestis* in the dramatic situation becomes apparent the moment they enter the orchestra. The *parodos* is not in the usual form. It is not a continuous song, but in part a colloquy, in which the two leaders of the half-choruses, in short sentences, in brief lyrical outbursts which betray their anxiety, exchange conjectures about the silence that reigns in the palace of Admetus.[1] Hope and fear alternate, but presently incline toward cruel certainty, particularly after the corypheus has questioned a maid-servant who has come forth from the palace, and has learned from her how Alcestis is preparing to consummate her sacrifice. At this point the emotion of the chorus is too keen to take the form of a regular song. The expected *stasimon* gives place to a lyrical dialogue in which the strophes, full of movement, are divided among several members of the chorus, who express the same feelings in various ways, first calling upon the gods, and then giving themselves up to despair. These men only just recall that they are aged and that their age gives them the right to make rapid reflections on the misfortunes which marriage brings in its train.[2] How can their thoughts leave Alcestis, whose last words they hear and whom they see dying in the arms of her husband and children? When left alone their first song is a farewell to that noble woman, a eulogy of her heroism. The arrival of Heracles, to whom the corypheus is obliged to reply, will doubtless distract them for a moment, and Admetus' decision that his mourning does not prevent him from receiving the stranger at his hearth will give them an opportunity to extol the virtues of hospitality which their master has erstwhile shown to a god. At this point, it may be that they recall with too much complaisance Apollo, the shepherd in Thessaly, and the wonders wrought by his lyre;[3] but they do not delay to follow the funeral procession of their mistress, and when they return with Admetus, they take the part of a friend or relative, sharing his grief and endeavoring to assuage it by words of consolation. Similarly in order to encourage Admetus to resignation they proclaim in their last song the irresistible power of Necessity; to dispel his despair by brilliant pictures of the future, they celebrate the apotheosis of Alcestis, whose grave they desire to see honored like that of a

[1] *Alcestis*, 77–111. [2] *Alcestis*, 238–243. [3] *Alcestis*, 568–587.

blessed goddess.[1] The dénouement fills them with joy and astonishment, and the last words of the corypheus, which express this astonishment, are not, as they are elsewhere, an empty phrase. We may therefore say that in the earliest of Euripides' plays which we possess, the rôle of the chorus—apart from a few unimportant details—is above all criticism.

Is this true also of the later plays? About the *Bacchanals* there can be no doubt. Although the scene of this drama is Thebes, its chorus is composed of foreign women, of Lydians, who have followed him whom they take to be the prophet of the god—but who is really the god himself—from the shores of Asia to Greece. Attached to the band of Dionysus, fanatical devotees of his cult, how could they do otherwise than boldly take sides with their divine master, as the action proceeds, and try to aid in the establishment of that religion whose peculiar virtues and wonderful ecstasies they enthusiastically extol? The sententious tone of two of the *stasima* and the chorus's repeated appeals to the faith of the simple-minded[2] are easily explained. Human reason must be confounded, the godlessness which rears its head must be crushed, a new world must be won for Dionysus. Therefore Pentheus, who blasphemes and is obdurate, is more than an enemy in the eyes of the women of the chorus,—he is a monster for whom they feel horror. When he threatens them with imprisonment, they invoke against him the aid of the god, whom they believe to be far off, but who is very near, and the god answers them from behind the scenes. When they know that the hour of punishment draws near for the sacrilegious Pentheus, their songs implore and urge divine vengeance, in merciless tones and with a terrible refrain:

"Justice, draw nigh us, draw nigh, with the sword of avenging appear:
Slay the unrighteous, the seed of Echion the earth-born, and shear
Clean through his throat, for he feareth not God, neither law doth he fear."[3]

When they see Agavè return and bring with her the head of Pentheus, they experience a kind of rapture of whose intensity the dialogue in which they engage with the unhappy mother gives evidence. But only a few moments ago they celebrated the triumph of Dionysus in dances and joyous songs. Thus they belong to the

[1] Third *stasimon*, 962–1005. [2] *Bacch.* 370, 862 *et seq.* [3] *Bacch.* 992–996.

god from one end of the play to the other. Nowhere has the character of the chorus more unity; nowhere has it more strength. To say that the chorus in this play is constantly interested in the plot would not be enough; we must say that it has a passion for it. And this passion, which finds expression in songs of such powerful effect or such original beauty, gives the chorus of the *Bacchanals* a rôle in the play, although it does not intervene in the action, since it actively contributes to the tragic effect.

The women[1] of the chorus of the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* are far from manifesting equally strong feeling. The reason which brings them near the scene of action is very trivial: they have left their country, Chalcis, crossed the Euripus and come to Aulis, to visit the camp of the Greeks, prompted simply by curiosity. It is not to be expected, therefore, that they will feel very profound sympathy with Agamemnon's daughter, whom they do not know. Furthermore, they are concerned less about Iphigeneia than about the fate of the expedition, the issue of the struggle for which they see the Greeks making their preparations.[2] The marriage proposed for the young girl merely awakens in their minds appropriate reflections on the inestimable value of moderate and legitimate love, which they contrast with illicit love, with the criminal union of Paris and Helen—the cause of the war. When the sacrifice has been decided upon and Clytemnestra in vain plans with Achilles to prevent its execution, these women hardly give even a vague intimation of their pity for the youthful victim, in a very general homily on the disappearance of virtue and the triumph of iniquity in the world. The principal theme of their song is a brilliant contrast between the mournful ceremony that is under way and the joyful marriage of Peleus and Thetis, celebrated long ago on Pelion by all the gods.[3] Do they experience greater emotion when they hear Iphigeneia bid farewell to the light of day, when they see her proceed courageously to her death? No. The only thing that touches them in that event is the interest that Greece has in it, the glory which is now assured to Agamemnon. They have no tears for his heroic daughter; their souls, like those of the aged

[1] Arnoldt (*Chorische Technik*, pp. 101–103) has shown conclusively that they are young women, but married.

[2] Second *stasimon*, 751–800.

[3] Third *stasimon*, 1036–1097.

men of the *Antigone* in an analogous situation, are closed to pity. Shall it be said that the poet is here at fault and that he has erred through an unwise choice of those who compose his chorus? Such a criticism, here levelled against Euripides, would apply also to Sophocles. It would seem that both poets desired this manifestation of callous indifference by the chorus at the most poignant moment of the drama.[1] By depriving their heroine, who is on the point of death, of ordinary sympathy, they place her in an isolation which ennobles her. If at this moment emotion is not manifested in the orchestra, it prevails certainly in the theatre, it is stirring the ranks of the spectators. Iphigeneia's position, like Antigone's, is such that lyric songs would not serve to heighten its effect. Moreover, the members of the chorus, in showing no interest in Iphigeneia's death, are true to the rôle which the poet has given them from the beginning of the play. Strangers to Argolis and to the family of Agamemnon, these women should be affected only moderately by events of which chance has made them witnesses and in which no interest of their own is at stake. In this regard the chorus of the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*[2] is very much like that of the *Andromache*.

Like the *Bacchanals*, the *Iphigeneia* is a product of the poet's old age. Now, since the chorus of the former of these tragedies is just as much interested in the action as the other is indifferent to it, we may be tempted to believe that chronological considerations have nothing to do with the rôle of the chorus in Euripides. But we must not come to a conclusion too hastily and must continue our investigation. Perhaps we shall arrive at the truth if we group with the plays performed after the poet's death those of his last years whose exact date we know, such as the *Orestes*, which ap-

[1] The genuineness of the song which accompanies and follows Iphigeneia's departure (1510–1531) is suspected by Kirchhoff and Arnoldt (*Chor. Technik*, pp. 296, 297). The latter asks with what propriety a general song of the chorus, which is not a *stasimon*, is introduced at such a place, immediately before the catastrophe. This is indeed irregular. But why deny this irregularity to a poet who is so fond of variety?

[2] It is true that the play, which was brought out by the younger Euripides after his father's death, may have been remodelled; but such a remodelling would evidently not have affected the entire rôle of the chorus. We have reason for doubting the authenticity only of the second part of the *parodos*, a catalogue which reminds us too much of that of the second book of the *Iliad* (see the Introduction by H. Weil to the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, and his note on 231).

peared in 408, or whose approximate date we know, such as the *Phoenician Maidens*, which belongs to about the same period.

The young Argive women who compose the chorus of the *Orestes* are earnestly devoted to Electra and her brother; and they needs must be, since a conspiracy is to be plotted before their eyes which will demand not only that they be discreet, but also that they give assistance. It is the women of the chorus to whom Electra assigns the task of watching while Orestes and Pylades force their way into the palace to kill Helen.[1] Just as we imagine that the murder is about to be committed, these women again, in order to prevent the suspicions of the Argives, attempt to drown Helen's cries in the noise of their dances and songs.[2] Where shall we find in Greek tragedy a chorus which is more intimately involved in the plot than this, if we except the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus? Nor is there any which takes a larger part in the dialogue. In this long drama, one of the longest written by Euripides,[3] choral song—properly speaking—is represented only by two rather short passages,[4] whereas a very great number of verses is rendered by the corypheus and various members of the chorus. Even the *parodos*, during which Electra's faithful friends noiselessly approach and ask for news of the sufferer from his sister, who is watching by his pallet, consists of a very brisk dialogue and one of some length. A still more remarkable fact, a feature unique in Euripides' dramas,[5] is the substitution for the third *stasimon*, at the point where we expect to find it, of a rapid dialogue, in which Electra, the corypheus, and the leaders of the half-choruses take part.[6] This preponderance of lyric dialogue over the ensemble songs lends a most dramatic character to the chorus of the *Orestes*. Are we disposed, however, to reproach the poet for his treatment of the second *stasimon*, in which the hackneyed idea of the fate which hangs over the house of the Atridae is repeated, and horror at

1 For this purpose they separate into two groups which are posted at different points (1251 *et seq.*).

2 *Orestes*, 1353 *et seq.*

3 It has not less than sixteen hundred and ninety-three verses.

4 *Orestes*, 316–347, first *stasimon;* 807–843, second *stasimon.*

5 Another example of this is found in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, where the second *stasimon* is replaced by a *commos* (827–864).

6 *Orestes*, 1246–1310.

Orestes' crime is vividly expressed? This treatment is connected with the subject of the play; it is connected poorly, we must admit, with the foregoing scene, in which we have seen Pylades hasten to offer his services to his friend. But Sophocles would furnish several analogous examples. Moreover, this *stasimon* is so short that the course of the drama is hardly interrupted by it. Barring this exception, the chorus of the Orestes acts and speaks as a secondary character might act and speak. Now, this play, in which the chorus is so well linked to the plot, was written shortly before the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, in which the chorus is so completely detached from the plot: it antedates the poet's death by only three years.

The *Phoenician Maidens*, which only slightly antedates the *Orestes*, is of a nature to renew the perplexity of a critic who seeks for a formula by which to define the rôle of the Euripidean chorus. The young girls in the *Phoenician Maidens* are even more alien to the drama than the women in the *Iphigeneia*, as they are Tyrians whom a circumstance, arbitrarily chosen by the poet, has brought from a considerable distance within the walls of Thebes. It is true that the Tyrians and the Thebans are slightly related through Agenor and Cadmus, if we go back to the origin of things. But does that suffice to warrant these virgins in taking part in the quarrel between Eteocles and Polyneices, or even in sharing the anguish of Iocasta? The poet has made a brave attempt to amuse his public by the spectacle of their costumes, which were not those of Greek women, and by their posture of Asiatic adoration, as they prostrate themselves before Polyneices when he comes upon the stage;[1] but these accessory details cannot conceal the capital fault of the poet's conception of this chorus. As timorous young girls they doubtless are terrified by the war; they tremble at the thought of "that cloud of shields which envelops the city;" but they cannot express this feeling with so much force and urgency as they would if Thebes were their native land. The violent dispute of the two brothers, of which they are witnesses, does not trouble them. Immediately after it they sing in a soft and calm rhythm how Cadmus founded Thebes in the midst of a blooming region where Dionysus was born and his festivals are celebrated, how the an-

[1] *Phoen. Maid.* 293.

cient dragon was killed and armed men sprang up from his teeth, and they beg Epaphus, Io's son, to send protecting gods[1] to the aid of the Thebans. Nor do the departure of Eteocles, who goes to confront his brother, and the devotion of Menoeceus move them to any greater extent. Their imagination, which current events do not succeed in engaging, darts off in rapid flight into the past, and strays here and there in the domain of the legendary history of Thebes, no detail of which escapes them: the Sparti, and the nuptials of Harmonia; the Sphinx and her riddle; Oedipus, the slayer of his father, the husband of his mother,—Oedipus, whose curses have kindled the quarrel of his sons! In this way we are quite skilfully brought back to the subject of the drama, and the thread which connects the songs of the chorus with this subject is never broken. But we have been carried away too far and have been too long distracted from what interested us.—Only once does the chorus fix our attention on the powerful impression made by the events of the drama: this occurs in its last song, where, in two very rapid strophes, it expresses the anxiety with which the single combat of Eteocles and Polyneices inspires it, and horror of that fratricidal struggle.[2] But this song, which is the more dramatic because it is divided among several members of the chorus, is the only one of its kind. None of the others can properly be called an interlude, for an *embolimon* "does not belong any more to one particular tragedy than to any other," whereas these songs do bear either nearly or distantly upon the theme in hand. But none of them arises directly from the situation or is replete with the emotions which it might be supposed to excite. Should this shortcoming be charged against the talent of the poet? Was not Euripides rather the victim of the necessity which forced him when he took up a subject which had already been dealt with by Aeschylus to conceive his chorus quite differently from the manner in which his predecessor had conceived it?

If, then, among the plays of Euripides' old age, there are two, the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and the *Phoenician Maidens*, in which the chorus does not show sufficient interest in the action, there are likewise two, the *Orestes* and the *Bacchanals*, in which the interest shown is quite as active as in the *Alcestis*. The *Suppliants* and *An-*

[1] First *stasimon*, 638–689.

[2] *Phoen. Maid.* 1284–1307.

dromache have already afforded us the same contrast at another period of the poet's career. Equivalence such as this, were it general, would plainly prevent our reaching a decision on the question with which we are occupied. Let us, however, by a rapid review of the remaining plays, now following their chronological order, see whether we must despair of arriving at a conclusion.

Medea is nothing but a foreigner in the eyes of the women of Corinth, who compose the chorus of the drama in which she is the heroine. But this foreigner engages all their sympathies because she has been deserted by the man she loved. Is not the cause of the betrayed woman the cause of all women? These women of Corinth therefore readily promise Medea that they will keep silent about her plans for vengeance. They share her indignation at Jason's faithlessness; they find words of compassion in which to bemoan the abandonment of the unhappy woman; or else in songs of a more general character, they deplore the baneful effects of love, of which they have so lamentable an example before their eyes. When Medea's decision has been confided to them, the crimes which she meditates are so atrocious that they cannot but try to deter her from committing them. But the horror which they feel for them is not sufficient to make them decide to desert her. Though they have the choice between Medea and the daughter of their king, whose life they could save by a warning, these women, because they are women, choose the foreigner. Must they not band together against the stronger sex, and above all, is it not right that Jason be punished? But his punishment is destined to take such a shocking form that the chorus' sympathy for the murderess necessarily becomes weaker by degrees and finally changes into aversion. When Medea is about to smite her children, the emotion of these women is at its height; they implore the sun god to save the lives of his descendants; they apostrophize the unnatural mother; when the victims utter their cries, they advance toward the palace and act as if about to force open its doors; and when all is over, they reprobate the barbarous deed, which they are able to compare only with the insanity of Ino.[1] From beginning to end these women participate in the situation and are affected by events. We can hardly reproach the corypheus for some rather frigid remarks

[1] *Medea*, 1251–1292.

about the disadvantages of paternity,[1] nor the entire chorus for the praise of Athens which takes up one half of the third *stasimon*. This passage, which we should think has no sufficient reason, since too long a time has elapsed since Aegeus' departure, certainly did not produce the same impresssion on Euripides' audience. A eulogy of Athens, even if extended—and this is short—could hardly seem out of place to Athenians. We may therefore unhesitatingly declare that the chorus of the *Medea*, which is so devoted to the principal character at the beginning, but is subsequently so revolted by her crimes, is, in all Greek tragedy, one of those most closely connected with the plot.

In this regard the chorus of the *Hippolytus* does not differ from that of the *Medea*. The two *commoi* of the play, the fairly long dialogues between the corypheus and the actors,[2] the dochmiac verses spoken by him or by his companions, are so many evidences of the interest which the chorus takes in the events and of the anxiety which these events cause it. Deeply attached to Phaedra, whose affliction has brought them near the palace and who lets her terrible secret escape her in their presence, bound to their queen by their oath to be discreet, these Troezenian women remain true to her to her death and even afterwards. They not only join Theseus in chanting the funeral lamentation over her body, but also, though they might clear Hippolytus by revelation of the truth, maintain a silence which saves Phaedra's honor, though we grant this is required by the sanctity of their oath. Immediately afterwards their interest is engaged by the evil fate of Hippolytus, whose exile they deplore. Although the second catastrophe does not wring from them the same lamentations as the first, the whole plot inspires the leader of the chorus to sing the strophe in which the irresistible power of Aphrodite is extolled.[3] The appropriateness of this last song is not to be denied. Is not Hippolytus the second victim of the goddess of love, and has she not directed the entire

1 *Medea*, 1081–1115. These remarks, for which the poet tries to find excuse, are not sufficiently motivated by the determination Medea has just reached. Euripides takes advantage of a lull in the action to communicate to the audience his ideas on marriage and children.

2 With the nurse, 267 *et seq.*; with Phaedra, 706 *et seq.*; with Theseus, 790 *et seq.*, 874 *et seq.*

3 This single strophe constitutes by itself the fourth *stasimon*, 1268–1282.

drama? On the other hand we cannot maintain that the chorus is constantly engaged with the situation and is at no point detached from it. At one point it longs to be changed into a bird, and fly far away from this wretched world, into the wonderful regions of the Adriatic, toward the happy realm of the Hesperides.[1] Elsewhere it abandons itself to reflections in which are mingled doubts about divine providence and longings for a completely happy life.[2] But these prayers and reflections are soon past, and the thoughts of the chorus quickly return with winged ease to the reality from which they had fled only for a moment. We should have to be very critical to reproach them for these temporary strayings.

What shall we say of the *Children of Heracles*, which belongs to the same period, if not that it would be difficult to conceive a closer relation between the chorus and the drama? The members of the chorus are citizens of the town to whose glorification the entire tragedy is devoted, Athens: the hospitable nature of the Athenians, their sense of honor, their fame, are the constant theme; and these the chorus never forgets from the moment it comes upon the scene to rescue the aged Iolaus, who has been roughly handled by Creon's herald, to the moment it hears Eurystheus declare the oracle that relates to the recent invasion of the Spartans. This chorus is really one of the players. It represents the Athenian people, who have a right to a rôle in a plot of this kind and to take their place by the side of king Demophon. The coryphaeus also, as becomes a citizen of a free country, intervenes frequently, speaking with tone of authority even to the king.[3] Here again, there is no lyrical digression, even in the *stasima*, which might admit it. The first *stasimon* is a proud defiance hurled at Argos. In the second, brief reflections on the inconstancy of fortune (they do not extend beyond a single strophe) introduce a eulogy of Macaria, whose heroic sacrifice will save her kinsmen. The third is a true war song, sung by the chorus during the progress of the combat, a religious song as well, characterized by the gravity and ardor of a paean, replete with a spirit of trust in the gods whose protection will assure victory. And finally the fourth celebrates,

[1] *Hippol.* 732–751.

[2] In the first pair of strophes of the third *stasimon*, 1112–1118.

[3] *Children of Heracles*, 273.

as we should expect, the fortunate issue of events, the safety of Heracles' children, due to noble Athens. There is no trace of fancy or caprice in the songs of the chorus of the *Children of Heracles*, nothing to remind us of the poet, everything to concentrate attention on the drama.

The chorus of the *Hecuba* is of a different character. These women certainly show no lack of interest in the plot. In the *parodos*, the corypheus brings Priam's widow the news that the Greeks have decided upon the sacrifice of Polyxena; she questions the slave who brings in the body of Polydorus, and groans with Hecuba at sight of it; toward the end she expresses the hope that Polymestor may be punished, and declares herself ready, if need be, to enter the tent in which the murder is being committed.[1] This chorus, however, has been reproached for dwelling too much on its own lot and for thinking too little of that of the actors in the drama. This is because it is placed in a position different from the usual situation of the members of a chorus, who are able to bestow all their emotions and their entire pity on others than themselves. If Hecuba's evil fortune is at its worst, that of the chorus, though less complete, is still cruel. These Trojan women, who have lost their husbands in the war, these captives, already the prey of their conquerors, who have just been torn from their native soil, and whom exile scatters to every corner of the earth, are very wretched. In this evil state, how could they show such abnegation as to forget themselves entirely and sink their own sorrows in the still more acute sorrow of her who was their queen? They must, then, like the chorus in Sophocles' *Ajax*—and with even greater reason—express personal views, which we might term egoistical. Their lyric songs do not deal with the immolation of Polyxena, with the murder of Polydorus by his treacherous host. Their thoughts are haunted by the memory of that last night in Troy, which they live over again in its smallest details; or else their imagination, turning to the future, pictures the cruelty and humiliation of the slavery which is in store for them. Troy overthrown and her women dragged into captivity, these are the things which they recall before all else, and which form, as it were, the background of the picture against which

[1] *Hecuba*, 1024–1034, 1042, 1043.

Hecuba's special misfortunes stand out. This chorus, certainly, by attracting attention to its own lot, as distinguished from that of the queen, at certain points makes itself independent of the chief character. It is no less certain that these *stasima*—and they are short—which make no reference to the successive events and to the various phases of the drama, but recall a general situation which undergoes no change, contribute in giving the chorus of the *Hecuba* a distinctive character.

The chorus of the *Heracles* likewise presents characteristics that are not met with in the earlier tragedies. Its rôle is as free from defect as we could desire. The aged Thebans who compose it, contemporaries and comrades in arms of Amphitryon, energetically defend Heracles' children against the usurper Lycus; they go so far as to menace him with their staves.[1] A speech of the corypheus, whose length is greater than was customary in Greek tragedy,[2] shows that they mean to have it understood that they are to be counted with. When Lycus is punished with death, they hear with satisfaction what passes behind the scenes, answer the distressed cries of the tyrant with pitiless words, and when he is mortally wounded and silence ensues, the joy they feel breaks forth in a song of victory, in which they associate all the deities, all the rivers, all the mountains of Thebes with the happiness of their deliverance.[3]—The second part of the drama agitates them even more. As they have been present at the interview between Iris and Lyssa, and know what is about to happen, they listen to the noises which come from within, divine what they do not see by what they hear, and follow the rapid progress of this horrible drama with increasing distress and terror. The sight which they subsequently behold, when the palace is opened and the *eccyclema* brings upon the stage the dead bodies of Heracles' children with their father by their side bound to a column, is too terrible to permit them to unite their voices in an ensemble song for the expression of their feelings. Each of them, in turn, deplores the awful calamity in brief words of sorrow, or else discusses it with

[1] *Heracles*, 252 *et seq.*

[2] It comprehends not less than twenty-three verses (252–274). Ordinarily the corypheus takes part in the dialogue in short remarks only.

[3] Third *stasimon*, 763–814.

Amphitryon. This extreme division of the voices of the chorus shows to how high a pitch its emotions are excited; its feeling is thus repeatedly expressed with painful insistence, and since it is individual it has a more penetrating effect.

And yet this chorus, although impassioned and invested with a dramatic rôle, is one of those whose songs offer grounds for criticism. We find in the *Heracles* for the first time a well marked example of those lyrical passages which are connected with the drama less by a genuine reason than by a pretext. I do not mean the hymn in honor of the hero's labors,[1] although this might certainly be inserted in any other tragedy of which Heracles was likewise the principal character; for according to the facts of the play he has descended into Hades, whence he does not return and it is to be feared will never return, and this hymn must be considered as a funeral panegyric and is not foreign to the situation. But it is hard to justify the second *stasimon*. A word suffices to call it forth. Heracles has just said that it is natural for a father to love his children, and the chorus immediately seizes this trite remark to sing the praises of youth by contrasting it with old age with its attendant troubles,—old age whose only consolation is devotion to the Muses.[2] This last idea, no doubt, brings us back to the subject, since the members of the chorus declare that, old as they are, they still know how to sing and wish to sing of Heracles. But in the interval the poet has made them say what he wished them to say and not what the drama demanded. We were expecting neither remarks about old age, nor malicious insinuations against the gods: we were hoping that the chorus would be overwhelmed by joy and surprise at the return of Heracles.

Two lyrical passages occur in the *Electra* which are just as little related to the plot, although they are differently inspired. The chorus does not express the poet's thought, but its own. This, however, is too readily dissociated from the present, and leaps away into the past, even to the most distant sources of the events which are about to happen. Was it really necessary to take up the history of the Pelopidae[3] beginning with the legend of the golden

1 First *stasimon*—very long, 348–450.

2 *Herac.* 637–700.

3 This occupies all the second *stasimon*. The transition occurs only at the end (745).

lamb? And in the first *stasimon*, granted that the ignominious death of Agamemnon which is recalled to mind in the epode forms a contrast with the glowing picture at the beginning of the magnificent departure of the Greek fleet, was it necessary that the mention of the leader of the expedition should awaken recollections of Achilles, and that the chorus should not be able to think of Achilles without promptly yielding to the temptation to describe in detail his divine armor?[1] This last description would truly be an *embolimon*, were it not set among occurrences which are related at least to the antecedents of the drama, if not to the drama itself.—This criticism, which is minimized[2] or exaggerated according to our feeling for Euripides, whether sympathy or antipathy, ought not, however, to mislead us as to the character of the chorus of the *Electra*. This chorus is anything but indifferent; on the contrary, it is one of those which are intimately connected with the chief actor, whose interests and views they share. Discretion, fidelity, devotion—these Argive women, Electra's friends, have all the virtues of their rôle. The arrival of Orestes fills them with satisfaction; they are eager for the success of the conspiracy; they dance with joy at the announcement of Aegisthus' murder, and invite Electra to dance with them.[3] The corypheus greets Clytemnestra, when she comes upon the stage, with perfidious respect and deference; and when she falls into the trap that has been set for her, the chorus answers her cries by recalling the murder of Agamemnon and by proclaiming the justice of the gods. And finally it expresses to Electra and Orestes the twofold feeling by which it is possessed upon seeing the dead body of their mother—the horror of parricide and the legitimacy of the vengeance taken. Thus it is constantly moved and distracted by all that it hears and sees. Twice only—in two intervals of the action and before any catastrophe occurs—it forgets its rôle and sings of the past.

In the *Daughters of Troy* the present is too painful, and it affects the women of the chorus too closely, to allow their feel-

[1] This long discourse about Achilles and his armor is the more difficult to explain because the scene of the play is Argos and not Phthiotis. The subject is merely adverted to in 479.

[2] For example, Hartung, *Eurip. restit.* vol. ii, p. 309.

[3] *Electra*, 859–865, 873–879.

ings to stray to other subjects. This chorus matches the chorus of the *Hecuba*. Here and there, about the aged wife of Priam, are grouped the women whom the victors are leading into captivity. There is only this difference at the opening of the two plays, that in the *Hecuba* the scene is placed on the coast of the Chersonesus, whereas here it is placed on the shores of the Troad itself, so that Troy is still visible on the horizon, and the impression made by the catastrophe, as it is more immediate, is necessarily more profound. Here likewise the situation of these women is such that it is impossible for them not to manifest an interest in themselves. Whether the present disaster reminds them of the first destruction of their city by Heracles;[1] or they dwell on the memory, fresh in their minds, of the last night of Ilium;[2] or, in thinking of what is in store for them, they utter imprecations against Menelaus and Helen,[3] the subject of their songs always remains the same, though under different guises and with inexhaustible variations: Troy, Troy above all else, fills their minds. Behind the aged queen, dethroned and overwhelmed with misfortunes, behind Andromache and Cassandra, there is the Trojan people, slain and mutilated, whose survivors these women are. The sorrows of the family of their princes is therefore lost for them in the sorrow of all. Now is it not right that this general situation which serves as a frame for the special action of the drama should not be forgotten, and is not this what the poet sought to accomplish in the songs of the chorus? Hecuba, after having wept for Astyanax, weeps also for Troy which has been burned and is now falling in ruins: despair at the general downfall is mingled with anguish over her domestic misfortunes. We therefore understand how the words of the chorus—which is the people—should frequently be nothing but a sort of mournful plaint about its destiny and the fate of its expiring fatherland, and why it should sing "the funeral hymn of Troy,"[4] as it has been called.[5]

[1] Second *stasimon*, 799 *et seq.*

[2] First *stasimon*, 511–576.

[3] *Daught. of Troy*, 1100–1117.

[4] Only the *parodos* contains a digression, where the chorus names the valley of the Peneus, Sicily and Magna Graecia as among the countries in which it would prefer to live, since it has been haled from Troy (214–229). This digression is explained by the political interests of the Athenians at this time (415 B.C.).

[5] Patin, *Tragiques grecs*, vol. iii, p. 335, seventh edition.

The Greek maidens of the chorus of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica* have nothing to distract them from a plot in which they are witnesses, confidantes, and even accomplices. Servants of Iphigeneia, closely bound to their mistress by ties of affection and by the intimacy of a common life in a barbarian country far from their native land, they are not only discreet and faithful, but wholly devoted, even to the point of imprudence. By giving false information to the messenger who hastens to inform the king of the prisoners' escape,[1] they expose themselves to Thoas' vengeance. As soon as they have been made acquainted with the plot, their only thought and hope is its success, although this must, as they think, condemn them to final separation from Iphigeneia. The subject of their songs, therefore, will be that of the drama. Their *parodos* is a lyrical dialogue divided between them and Iphigeneia, in which they express the same views as their mistress: regret for their lost country, memory of the misfortunes of Agamemnon's family, mourning for the supposed death of Orestes. The first two *stasima* are as appropriate to the situation as possible: in the first the chorus, at sight of Orestes and Pylades, asks who these Greeks can be who have come to the Taurian land, by what miracle they have passed between the twin crags of the Symplegades; in the second, when informed of the preparations for escape, these Greek maidens envy the good fortune of Iphigeneia, whom they would like to be able to follow, winging their way across the seas, to the land of Greece and the threshold of their father's home. The third *stasimon*, which is a song in honor of Apollo and relates how the god-prophet once took possession of the oracle at Delphi,[2] at first surprises us; but this apparent digression has its *raison d'être* in the requirements of the play. The hour has come when Iphigeneia makes ready to flee with Orestes and Pylades, taking with her the statue of Artemis; the undertaking is difficult and dangerous—it will succeed only if nothing adverse intervenes. Could the chorus venture at this critical point publicly to express anxiety or hope that alluded to the situation? The king, no doubt, is not there to hear them, but he is in the temple whose door is seen at the back of the stage, and at any moment the door may open. If, therefore, the chorus wishes not to rouse the suspicion of Thoas,

[1] *Iphig. in Taur.* 1288 *et seq.*

[2] Third *stasimon*, 1234–1283.

it must speak of something else than that which really engrosses its attention. Hence the eulogy of Apollo that compromises nobody, whose purport Thoas would not understand were he to appear suddenly, but which the spectator comprehends, provided he reflects. But in fact it is the oracle at Delphi that has led Orestes to Taurica, and thus Orestes is saved at the very moment when he thought himself lost. The god who has watched over the issue of this adventure is indeed worthy of eulogy, and the truthfulness of his oracles deserves to be extolled. If we admit this explanation, the chorus of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica* cannot be charged with a single superfluous digression.

The chorus of the *Ion*, whose entrance into the orchestra is not adequately motivated, perhaps busies itself too curiously with the frieze of the temple of Delphi, which it examines and admires much after the manner of a company of tourists.[1] But when the plot gets under way, the chorus becomes part and parcel of it. Creusa has in these women servants who are absolutely devoted, as their class generally is, to the interests of their mistress. At the very outset they try to aid her in her undertaking, by calling upon Athena and Artemis, the sisters of Apollo, imploring them to intercede with their brother to grant a happy posterity to the race of Erechtheus. The god's curious reply strikes them dumb, disquiets them and makes them anxious for Creusa, whose grief they picture to themselves when she shall find herself in the presence of a son who is not hers, but her husband's. It is they, however, who must break the cruel news to her, and even the discretion with which they do this is not calculated to lessen its bitterness. The indignation which they feel easily leads them to approve their mistress's plans of vengeance, and even to conspire with her. This son of whom Apollo has just made an unexpected present to Xuthus they curse, and they earnestly hope for his destruction, not only because they love Creusa, but also because they are Athenians and would like to prevent an intruding foreigner from entering the royal family of Attica by a trick; furthermore, being women, they are shocked by the adultery of which they believe that this child is the offspring. Since they have compromised themselves with Creusa, they are seized with terror when

1 *Parodos*, 184–218.

all is discovered, and the anguish they feel on their own account is as great as the despair which overwhelms them when their mistress is condemned to death. Thus the chorus of the *Ion* is one of those closely connected with the chief actor, whose wishes it promotes and whose feelings it shares.

The same is true of the chorus of the *Helen*, the captive young Greek women who in turn weep with the wife of Menelaus, console or help her, or even lend her effective aid, since they persuade her not to believe Teucer's report of the death of her husband and to enter with them into the Egyptian palace in order to consult the prophetess Theonoe.[1] Just as upon returning[2] they announce with satisfaction the oracle which declares that Menelaus is alive, so at the close, their farewells and their heart-felt good wishes accompany the vessel which carries away toward the Greek fatherland the exiled Helen, who henceforth is not to be separated from her husband.[3] These maidens, then, are wholly devoted to the person of Helen. We are consequently the more surprised to hear them sing a song[4] whose connection with the drama we seek in vain. Why do they conjure up the image of Demeter, coursing hill and dale in search of her daughter? What is the propriety of depicting the wrath, fatal to the human race, and gloomy despair of the goddess, from whom only Cypris can provoke a smile? What have the fawn-skin and thyrsus of Dionysus to do here? Neither Cybele confounded with Demeter, nor Dionysus, nor Aphrodite herself, has anything to do with the heroine of Euripides' tragedy. All the ingenuity of minds learned and subtle has failed to discover adequate explanations or to restore the continuity of a corrupt text, whose incoherence, especially toward the end, is manifest. The connection of this song with the subject of the drama is explained at the end of the ode in a manner so unexpected[5] that it would be an insult to Euripides to hold him responsible for the clumsy device. This ode, the only song of its kind in what remains to us of the Greek drama, is an *embolimon*

[1] *Helen*, 306–329.

[2] The *epiparodos* is identical with the first *stasimon*, and is very short, 515–527.

[3] *Helen*, 1451–1511.

[4] This is the third *stasimon*, 1301–1368.

[5] All Helen's misfortunes are said to be due to the wrath of Demeter, to whom she has neglected to offer sacrifices (1355–1357).

in the true sense of the word. Let us therefore consider it as such,[1] and not hesitate to believe that though it may originally have had a place in one or possibly two of Euripides' tragedies, it is entirely irrelevant in the *Helen*.

III

CONCLUSION: THE CHORUSES THAT DO NOT MANIFEST INTEREST IN THE DRAMA ARE EXCEPTIONS

The analyses we have been rapidly making of all Euripides' tragedies, with due regard to chronology in grouping or contrasting them, were necessary in order that we might reach a well founded opinion on the question we proposed at the beginning of this chapter. If the reader has followed us, he will now see that to condemn the choruses of Euripides with a single stroke of the pen, as has often been done, and to declare that they are hardly ever connected with the action, is as unjust to the poet as it is contrary to the facts. These choruses are not all alike, and the differences which mark them make it impossible to bring them all under a single sweeping condemnation. In fact, among all the plays of Euripides there are but three, the *Andromache*, *Phoenician Maidens* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, in which the chorus takes only a moderate interest in the drama, whose actors it conceives as strangers. —Now may not three plays out of seventeen that have come down to us be justly regarded as exceptions? There are two others, the *Hecuba* and the *Daughters of Troy*, whose choruses should be placed in a class apart, as the conception and construction of these dramas are themselves quite unusual. As the poet wished the special misfortunes of his heroines to be lost sight of in a general catastrophe—that of their native land—it follows that the members of the choruses are no longer simply the acolytes of the *dramatis personae*, but, although not entirely detached from them, are distinguishable from them by their own interests and feelings, which are those of an entire people. Perhaps the expression of these feelings impairs to a degree dramatic unity, as the theorists of the French classic tragedy have conceived it; but it is con-

1 See W. Dindorf, *Annot.* ii, verses 895, 896.

sistent with nature. How can we characterize as interludes songs which have their sole inspiration in the distress of the present moment? And shall we find fault in Euripides with what is often admired in Aeschylus,—a chorus which is marked by individual traits, and the rôle of which is not lost in that of the chief actor?

As to the other tragedies, from the beginning to the end of the poet's career, from the *Alcestis* to the *Bacchanals*, the rôle of the chorus in them cannot be a matter of controversy. Faithful friends, or else devoted servants of the hero or heroine of the play, the members of the chorus feelingly follow all the events, are troubled by all the changes of fortune, often desire to intervene in the action, and sometimes do intervene in it. Nay, more, in the *Suppliants* our entire interest centres in them. Finally, their division into half-choruses or into still smaller groups, the frequent occurrence of *commoi*, and the numerous dialogues of the coryphaeus with the actors between the lyric songs, show that the stage never fails to interest them.

We must, however, fully recognize that even in these tragedies they sing certain passages that are foreign to the action, or at times have an extremely slight connection with it. But these passages, which are *stasima*,[1] that is, songs rendered between two acts, are far from being as numerous as is generally supposed. If we except the third *stasimon* of the *Helen*, which is evidently an interpolation, and the third of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, in which the situation appears to have been intentionally ignored, we meet with them in only two plays, the *Heracles* and *Electra*. For if in the *Medea* and *Hippolytus* the chorus' thoughts occasionally break away and stray from the subject, this is never for more than the duration of a strophe, and they wander only for a moment to return incontinently. Thus, adding the *Heracles* and *Electra* to the *Andromache*, *Phoenician Maidens* and *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, we are able to state that only five out of seventeen of Euripides' tragedies contain *stasima*—one or at most two in a play—which are not well connected with the drama. Does this statement warrant the conclusion that as a general thing Euripides' choruses have no connection with the action? Such a conclusion would

[1] With the exception only of the *parodos* of the *Ion*.

completely disregard the facts, for the majority of the facts contradict it; it would make a rule of an exception.

Moreover, do not these *stasima* which have met with so much criticism and are so distasteful to us admit of an explanation? Was it an absolute rule of Greek tragedy that the chorus must always express its successive emotions in its ensemble songs, that it must necessarily prolong through the entr'actes the tragic effects of the acts, and never grant respite to the spectators' feelings? May it not be admitted that at certain points, or pauses, the poet may have wished the songs of the chorus to serve as a respite and relaxation for the audience? We are inclined to think so, when we compare Euripides with Sophocles in this respect. What is the long chorus in the *Antigone* on the inventive spirit of man and the song that follows in honor of Bacchus,[1]—what are the strophes in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* on impiety and man's audacity,[2] which are so slightly motivated by Iocasta's scorn of the oracles,—and what is the magnificent digression in the *Oedipus at Colonus*, the famous eulogy of Athens—what are all these but the same sort of passages which shock us in Euripides? The special excellence of Sophocles' lyrics, the elevation of his moral ideas, the superiority of his genius, do not enter into this question. We merely call attention to the fact that in three tragedies out of seven[3] Sophocles also has not connected all the choral songs closely with the dramatic situations. Shall we claim that he, like his rival, is here in fault? We shall hardly venture to go so far as that, but shall rather be led to think that Sophocles' example justifies Euripides and should absolve him from one of the most serious charges made against his skill as an artist.

[1] *Antigone*, 334–375 and 1115–1152. In the first passage the allusion to the situation is so vague that we ask whether it refers to Creon or to those who have violated Creon's commands.

[2] Second *stasimon*, 863–910.

[3] We might cite also the third *stasimon* of the *Ajax*, in which the members of the chorus, instead of weeping over their master's death, bewail themselves (1184 *et seq.*).

CHAPTER VI

THE LYRICS

PREAMBLE

IF we were to listen to Aristophanes, it would not take long to pass judgment on Euripides' lyrics. We should feel nothing but scorn for those short verses, full of repetitions and interjections, whose pretentious and unoriginal music suggests successively "songs of the banquet, Carian flutes, dance-tunes, and funeral dirges," and which deserve no better accompaniment than that of "the castanets."[1] But if we remember that approbation, and approbation long continued, is evidence of indisputable worth in case of products of the mind, we shall be slow to give credence to Aristophanes. The anecdote of the Greeks in Sicily who gave a bit of bread and water as alms to the Athenians who were able to sing to them passages from Euripides might, if it were isolated, be set down to the credulity of Plutarch.[2] But we read of a writer of the middle comedy, Axionicus, who made fun of the music lovers who were crazy about the tunes of our poet and did not wish to hear any others.[3] And later we have Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who stops to remark upon the way in which the first words of the *parodos* of the *Orestes* were sung.[4] Finally Lucian relates the lively story of the performance of the *Andromeda* at Abdera,[5] and speaks of the monody of the *Hecuba* as a passage that everybody must know from having heard it in the theatre.[6] The long vogue which these citations indicate[7] could not be accounted for had not the songs which enjoyed it been marked by poetic and musical qualities — perhaps chiefly musical — that delighted both mind and ear. It also necessitates the conclusion that Euripides brought the technique of dramatic music to such perfection that after him this music was no longer susceptible of important changes or noticeable growth, which in course of time might have caused its

[1] *Frogs*, 1301–1307, Kock.
[2] *Life of Nicias*, 29, 4, 5.
[3] Athen. iv, p. 175 b.
[4] *On the Arrangement of Words*, xi.
[5] See p. 15.
[6] *On Dancing*, 27.
[7] There is no similar evidence for Aeschylus or Sophocles.

original form to be forgotten. Now if the Greeks, by a passion for Euripides' songs which lasted through several centuries, have condemned Aristophanes and his taunts, is it for us to charge them with lack of taste?

It will, moreover, be difficult to determine the extent of the poet's originality in his lyrics. We do not speak of the collaborators with whom he has been credited: the part which Cephisophon and Timocrates of Argos may have had in his musical work —if indeed there is any truth in the story of their collaboration[1] —evidently cannot be determined. But the resemblances which connect Euripides' lyrics with those of Sophocles, while they are less obscure, are still of a very delicate kind. When we compare Aeschylus with his two successors, we can readily see wherein his lyrics differ from theirs; but when Sophocles and Euripides resemble one another, while they differ from Aeschylus, how shall we know which of the two was the innovator and by whom the transformation which we perceive was brought about? It would, then, be rash to conclude that Euripides lacked inventiveness in dividing the chorus and in the use of rhythms, as though he were an heir of Sophocles, and not—we must not fear to repeat it—his contemporary.

The subject we are about to study may be divided into two essential parts. We must keep in mind the difference between the choral element, that is, the passages sung by the whole chorus or by parts of the chorus, and the songs from the stage, which comprise *duos* and *monodies*. Let us begin with the choral element.

I

FORMS AND RHYTHMS OF THE DIFFERENT CHORAL PARTS

When Euripides first made his appearance in the theatre, dramatic dialogue had already been developed to such an extent that the curtailing of the choral songs must have been an accomplished fact. They do not indeed occupy more space in his first plays than in his last. It is well known that the proportion of choral songs to

[1] Aristophanes (fragm. 580) speaks only of Cephisophon. Timocrates is mentioned only in the anonymous *Life*, p. 2, lines 1, 2, Schwartz.

the entire drama, which sometimes exceeds one half in Aeschylus, is in his successors less than one third, or roughly stated about one quarter.[1] But it would be useless to try to assign even an approximate date to this change, which without doubt took place gradually. Even in Aeschylus this proportion is not fixed and appears to depend chiefly upon the subject chosen by the poet. If, in the *Suppliants*, five hundred and fifty verses out of ten hundred and seventy-four are taken by the members of the chorus, is this not because the chorus is the principal character? If, on the other hand, in the *Prometheus*, only one hundred and forty verses out of ten hundred and ninety-three are sung by the band of Oceanids, is this not because the Oceanids have only a slight rôle in the drama, in which the Titan is supposed alone to hold our interest and attention? The chorus of the Prometheus certainly is an exception among the extant choruses of Aeschylus; but who can guarantee that among the plays now lost there were not others constructed in a similar fashion, in which the chorus was just as limited in its range? At any rate it will not do to attribute to Euripides any more than to Sophocles the introduction of a modification of which Aeschylus affords the first example, and which the taste of the people — when, is not known — finally sanctioned.

In 455, the date of the production of Euripides' first plays, the organization of the tragic chorus was complete and definitive; the increase in the number of the members of the chorus from twelve to fifteen — which is attributed by tradition to Sophocles — dates back to the last years of Aeschylus' career and cannot be ascribed to Euripides. But several of his tragedies afford an example of a fact which appears foreign to the dramas of Sophocles, the presence on the stage, at certain times, of a *supplementary chorus*, quite distinct from the principal chorus stationed in the orchestra. When Hippolytus comes upon the stage, he bids his comrades in the chase sing a hymn in honor of Artemis.[2] This is very short — it consists of only eight verses. Does this warrant

[1] For example, the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles contains 380 lyric verses in a total of 1,471; the *Trachiniae*, 328 in 1,278. These plays and the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, it is true, are those in which the lyrical element plays the least part.

[2] *Hippol.* 61–69.

the supposition that Hippolytus' cortége was composed of mutes, and that the real chorus sang behind the scenes? This hypothesis[1] does not agree with what we know happened in other tragedies. In the *Phaethon* the maidens who sang the hymeneal song were not a part[2] of the chorus of the play. In the *Alexander* too, there appeared an extra chorus consisting of a group of men dressed as shepherds;[3] in the *Antiope*, in addition to the regular chorus that represented old men,[4] a singing chorus of women or maidens' accompanied Dirce upon the stage. This simultaneous appearance of two choruses surely cannot have been a great surprise to the Athenians who had seen Aeschylus' Eumenides leave the orchestra, preceded by a procession of women singing two pairs of strophes. But these facts are evidence that Euripides, obtaining at various times grants of supplementary choruses[5] from the choregus in addition to his usual provision, undertook thereby to lend greater life and brilliancy to the performance.

The most regular choral parts were the *stasima*, which for this reason we shall consider before the *parodos*. Placed at the main intervals of the action and designed to recall the spectators' attention to the structure of the drama whose episodes they separate clearly,—episodes are what nowadays we call acts,—the *stasima* by reason of their very nature must have been subject to certain traditional laws and must have lent themselves with difficulty to the fancies of the poet. In Euripides they appear to have been sung usually by the united voices of the entire chorus. We are quite well aware that certain critics—more particularly Muff and Hense—have tried to establish that it was otherwise in Sophocles, and with liberal hand have distributed all the strophes and

1 Arnoldt, *Die Chorische Technik des Euripides*, p. 7, n. 1.

2 Fragm. 781, verse 32, Nauck.

3 Schol. *Hippol.* 58. On this chorus see Welcker, *Griech. Trag.* p. 469.

4 These old men are Thebans, according to the scholiast of the Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* But a recently discovered fragment of the *Antiope* (Weil, *Journal des Savants*, September, 1891) shows that the chorus did not know king Lycus. They are therefore old men from Eleutherae, the scene of the play, or even from Athens.

5 The name παραχορηγήματα is sometimes given to these choruses; but it must be remembered that the word παραχορήγημα has a more general meaning and designates all that the choregus supplied beyond his legal obligations (supplementary choruses and actors; children for the children's parts, etc.).

antistrophes of the poet's *stasima* between the half-choruses, allotting only the rare epodes to the entire chorus. But such a division, while it is manifestly impossible in certain cases, cannot, in the absence of all ancient evidence, be established for the rest, and remains a very improbable hypothesis. How can we admit that the chorus which is always divided in the *commoi*, and is often divided in the *parodos*, is likewise regularly divided in the *stasima*, so that certain of Sophocles' tragedies would not contain a single lyrical ensemble passage, that is, a single chorus properly so called? We need not hesitate, therefore, to believe that Euripides' *stasima* were usually true choruses. But so great was the variety of lyrical forms which the poet had at his command, or rather so keen was his desire to attempt innovations, that in his dramas some exceptions do occur to what appears to have been the general rule. In the second *stasimon* of the *Suppliants*,[1] even if the division of the voices into two parts were not shown in the manuscripts, it would be impossible not to recognize it. In fact the two iambic strophes of this chorus, instead of being continuous, as was customary, are divided up into single verses, or at most into periods of five verses, between two groups of voices, sometimes perhaps even between two voices only (those of the leaders of the half-choruses), which express conflicting sentiments,—confidence and anxiety,—the one replying to questions put by the other. Thus this song is a regular lyrical dialogue.[2]—A more surprising irregularity occurs in the *Orestes*, in which, in place of one of the *stasima*, there is found a passage of a quite different kind,[3]—a dialogue between Electra and the half-choruses. In the previous year Sophocles had similarly replaced two *stasima* by two *commoi* in his *Philoctetes*.[4] Thus toward the end of the fifth century the tragic poets allowed themselves the greatest liberty in distributing the lyrical parts of their plays, and there was nothing to prevent them from giving the chorus a more dramatic character by

[1] *Suppliants*, 598–633.

[2] The division is less apparent in the strophe and antistrophe of the second *stasimon* of the *Ion*. But it seems inferable from the interrogatory tone of this passage, from the appeals which the women of the chorus address to one another (695), and from the use of the dochmiac metre, so rare in this kind of songs.

[3] *Orestes*, 1246–1310.

[4] *Philoct.* 827–864, 1081–1217.

sometimes substituting for the customary *stasima* more lively passages that were executed in a more animated manner.

These are exceptions. Almost always, in Euripides, regular *stasima* occur between the acts, that is, songs in which all the voices of the chorus take part and which are composed of a variable number of strophes. We are well aware that these strophes are much shorter than those in the earlier tragedies: the lyric stream of Aeschylus, which flowed between full banks, broad and strong, has become nothing but a rivulet with narrow bed and restricted flow. The poet of the *Persians* required not less than six, eight, or even ten strophes to pour forth the flood of the chorus' impressions; two pairs of strophes, or even only two strophes, sometimes followed by an epode, now suffice for Sophocles and Euripides, whose breath may not be shorter, but who fear to tire their audience.

It has been remarked that the strophic composition of Euripides' *stasima* presents a sort of uniformity, in so far as all the *stasima* of a given play generally contain the same number of strophes.[1] There is an explanation for this. As the *stasima* were the principal and traditional part of the chorus, in which its songs were accompanied by regular dance movements, both eye and ear were pleased to find in them that symmetry for which the Greeks manifested such taste in all their works of art; and as these *stasima* marked the divisions of the play, it was well that there should not be too great disparity among them. Euripides did not, however, make a rule of this uniformity, and by occasionally varying the number of strophes in the *stasima* of the same drama,[2] he has given evidence of that independence which is characteristic of his artistic nature. With the same freedom he makes more frequent use of the *epode* than Aeschylus and Sophocles. For a lyric poet who liked his ease, the epode was a convenience, since it was not subject to the regularity which governs the strophes. Beginning

[1] Cf. Arnoldt, *Die chorische Technik des Euripides*, p. 178, and the conspectus which he has given, pp. 180–186.

[2] See the second *stasimon* of the *Children of Heracles*, the first of the *Heracles*, the third of the *Suppliants* and of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*. These are, in fact, the only exceptions; for the fourth *stasimon* of the *Hippolytus* is perhaps incomplete, the third of the *Electra* is an *hyporcheme*, and the first of the *Helen* an *epiparodos*.

with the *Hippolytus*, in the year 428, epodes occur at the close of one or of two *stasima* in the majority of the poet's tragedies; in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and the *Bacchanals* there are as many as three. At this period the epode is no longer a sort of appendage to the last antistrophe, which pours its surplus length into it; it is an independent part, which expresses its own ideas and is equivalent to a pair of strophes. By replacing this missing pair of strophes by an epode, Euripides reduced the number of strophes of the ancient *stasimon* to their minimum, and in accomplishing this reduction—if indeed he was not anxious to rid himself of trouble—he gave evidence of his predilection for these freer lyrical forms in which his talent delighted.

Ever since the time of Aeschylus, to whom belongs the honor of selecting among the forms which lyric poetry offered those which were best adapted to tragedy, the poets had at their disposal a very great variety of rhythms for their *stasima*. This variety is greater in Euripides than in Sophocles,[1] in whose plays logaoedic verses, either pure or containing iambic feet, are so general that hardly five or six strophes could be cited in which they do not occur. The logaoedic rhythm is also Euripides' favorite. And why should he not frequently have used this medium which was so easy to manage, so obedient to the poet's will—these graceful measures whose flexibility lent itself to the expression of the most various sentiments? On account of its pliability, its moral indifference (I mean the absence of that *ethos* of which the Greek critics and metricians so often speak), this was the rhythm which suited best, when the poet desired not to produce powerful effects, but simply to give pleasure by the airy grace of his verse. As a rule, there was nothing emotional in it, or else the emotion which it expressed was not very profound; yet the great passions do not usually find expression in the *stasima*, which are not the proper place for them. But while Euripides made frequent use of the logaoedic rhythm, he did not employ it to the exclusion of others. Even a superficial count enables us to state that this is not the constituent rhythm in more than one half of his lyrics. In his choruses occur several other forms which Aeschylus had already employed, but which Sophocles appears almost to have abandoned.

[1] This was established by Bergk, *Griech. Literat.* vol. iii, p. 117.

Euripides eschews neither the dactylic nor the trochaic metre, nor above all the combination of these with one another or with the epitrite; in moments of great trouble his chorus sings dochmiac strophes; nor does he allow the iambic strophes to fall into disuse, of which Aeschylus had made such fine use, and which he himself employs successfully in the *Andromache*, the *Daughters of Troy* and especially in the *Suppliants*, where they marvellously express the intense grief of the women of the chorus, their plaintive appeals and urgent prayers. And finally he sometimes elevates to its old place the Ionic rhythm that originated in Asia, which Aeschylus had employed especially in his *Persians*, and which after him he adopts in a *stasimon* of the *Bacchanals*,[1] using it to express in turn both the soft languor and the passionate exaltation of the Dionysiac cult. Does this greater wealth of metrical forms[2] arise from the fact that the extant part of Euripides' plays is much more extensive than the extant part of Sophocles? Perhaps. But should we not also take into account the mobile spirit of a poet who is always in search of new or varied effects in his dramas, and also of the skill and industry of an artist who knows all the resources of his art and wishes none of them to be lost?

The *parodos* was less subject to fixed laws than the *stasima*. The *parodos*, in the proper sense of the word, should always have been the lyrical passage sung by the chorus at its entrance, while it defiled under the eyes of the audience to the platform in the orchestra and the place assigned to it. But this definition is not hard and fast: when Aristotle speaks of the *parodos*, he merely says that it was "the first complete song of the chorus."[3] The procession of the members of the chorus, toward the end of the first scene, or immediately after it, which Sophocles seems to have regularly introduced, was not indeed necessary nor required by tradition. Occasionally it was just as the curtain was raised[4] that

[1] *Bacch.* 518–575, Wecklein.

[2] In verification of the facts, see the table of the rhythms of Euripides' choruses published by Arnoldt (*loc. cit.*).

[3] *Poetics*, xii: Χορικοῦ δὲ πάροδος μὲν ἡ πρώτη λέξις ὅλου χοροῦ, corrected by Westphal to read, λέξις ὅλη τοῦ χοροῦ. The definition of the scholiast of the *Phoenician Maidens*, 202 ("the *parodos* is the song of the chorus sung while it enters in procession"), is not exact and does not apply to every case.

[4] This is merely a modern way of speaking. It is known that the existence of

the audience heard the first words of the chorus, already grouped either in the orchestra, or exceptionally on the stage itself. Aeschylus had furnished examples of this in his *Suppliants*, *Persians* and *Eumenides*. Exactly the same thing did not occur in Euripides, where the drama never begins with a song; here an actor always delivers the prologue. But this actor did not prevent the chorus from sometimes being present at the very beginning, either by his side, as in the *Suppliants*, or in the orchestra, as in the *Bacchanals*. And, so far as these two plays are concerned, the poet had a purpose which is easily discovered. Since the chorus is the real *raison d'être* of the *Suppliants*, is it not right that it should be present when the action begins? And on the other hand, is not the Lydian band of the *Bacchanals* the inseparable companion of the god's prophet who speaks the prologue and whose suite these women constitute?

When the poet is not guided by these special considerations, the chorus enters, either in silence during the first dialogue, or in song when this has ended. In this particular Euripides' practice does not differ from that of Sophocles. They both had to relinquish the large development of the Aschylean *parodos*, which, generally preceded by a long anapaestic prelude spoken by the corypheus, unfolded its ample length in a protracted series of strophes.[1] The prelude, which still retains its place, although this is very restricted, in the *Ajax* and *Alcestis*, subsequently disappears almost entirely,[2] and the *parodos* itself is curtailed to the extent demanded by a public which henceforward is more interested in dialogue than in song. This public, no doubt, dreaded monotony; for the poets offer it *parodoi* of such different forms that in course of time the most regular of these has become almost the exception. In only six of seventeen tragedies by Euripides were all the voices of the chorus united in singing the first passage, and, furthermore, we cannot be sure that this ensemble lasted during the whole *parodos*. The repetition of the same idea in two pairs

a curtain, proved for the Roman theatres, has not been satisfactorily established for the Greek theatres. Albert Müller, *Griech. Bühnenalterthümer*, pp. 168–170, sums up the discussions of this subject.

[1] It is, however, to be observed that the *parodoi* of the *Choephori* and *Eumenides* are quite short.

[2] It occurs again only in the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*.

of successive strophes,[1] the expression of different views on the events of the drama,[2] the appeals which the members of the chorus appear to make to one another,[3] and other indications gathered in an attentive study of the text, warrant the supposition that even in these apparently regular *parodoi*, although the entire chorus sang at the outset, it was subsequently divided into halves, and finally relinquished the epode to its leader.[4] But, without delaying on what is mere probability and not certainty, we see in the *parodos* of the *Suppliants* an evident division, which is accounted for by the special and quite exceptional composition of the chorus of that play. This chorus lacks unity: it consists of two groups of women of different estate, one being composed of the servants of the other. As these two groups cannot be of equal size, since there had to be not less than fifteen members in the chorus, the mothers of the Argive heroes number only five,[5] whereas their attendants are ten. The song begun by the former is continued and completed by the latter, and is thus clearly divided into two parts. In the *parodos* of the *Alcestis* also the division, even if it were not attested by the manuscripts, would be immediately apparent. It is not indeed a mere musical division, but it corresponds to the varying sentiments of the members of the chorus, who are divided between hope and fear for the fate of Admetus' wife. The interchange of their conflicting impressions made by the leaders of the half-choruses, often with lively effect, in a single verse or even in half a verse, gives a dramatic character to this *parodos*, which is in fact a dialogue.

This character is much less marked in the *parodos* of the *Ion*, in which the conversation that at first the leaders of the half-choruses and then the corypheus and the son of Apollo hold with one another [6] cannot have a moving effect, since its subject is of no importance and it is prompted merely by curiosity. But in the *Daughters of Troy* the poet has made a skilful use of the division

[1] *Parodos* of the *Andromache*.
[2] *Hippolytus*.
[3] *Heracles*.
[4] *Hippolytus* and *Heracles*.
[5] Arnoldt (*Chorische Technik*, pp. 72–77) seems to us to have clearly shown that this must have been so. Verse 963, in which "seven mothers" are mentioned, refers to the traditional number, and not to the actual dramatic representation.
[6] *Ion*, 184–237. Cf. O. Hense, *De Ionis partibus lyricis*.

into half-choruses, in order to rouse interest; the captive Greek women come forth from their tents attracted by the groans of Hecuba, but not all at the same time. A first group is followed after an interval of a few minutes by a second, and the second series of lamentations doubles the effect produced by the first.[1] Why should this effect be immediately diminished by an ensemble song in which the chorus, forgetting Hecuba, declares in what country it would prefer to dwell, and makes an unexpected eulogy of Thessalian Peneus, the land of Aetna, and the region of Crathis? The desire to allude to the Sicilian expedition, which at that time engaged everybody's attention, is the only explanation for this digression.

Frequently also the dialogue of the *parodos* takes place not between the two halves of the chorus, but between the corypheus—sometimes supported by members of the chorus—and the actors. The *parodos* in this case loses its special character and becomes a true *commos*, since the Greek critics give this name to all lyrical dialogues between the orchestra and the stage. This alteration of the regular form of the first choral song is not the work of Euripides. Aeschylus, in his *Prometheus*, had furnished the first example of it, and this was followed by Sophocles. Is it due to chance, is it the result of that selection which has preserved for us only a portion of Greek tragedy, that *parodoi* of this form occur only in the *Electra*, the *Philoctetes* and the *Oedipus at Colonus*,—that is, in plays of which the last two at least are the products of the poet's old age? This is probably the case, for as early as 431 the *parodos* of Euripides' *Medea* had the same character. The chorus upon its appearance conversed with the nurse, who was on the stage, while behind the scenes Medea gave vent to her grievances and uttered her imprecations. Thus three voices were heard in turn,—of which only one was in the chorus,—and these, by the expression of sentiments which varied from anxiety to despair, together produced the effect of distress for which the poet had sought and which an ordinary *parodos* would have been powerless to afford.

When, therefore, Euripides desires to take possession of the souls of his audience, from the very beginning of a drama, he

[1] *Daught. of Troy*, 153–234.

does not grant them time to listen to the regular harmonies of an uninterrupted sequence of strophes sung by concerted voices; they hear a dialogue, generally in very short parts, in which the chorus participates only with a few voices, namely, those of its leaders. In this way the *parodos* becomes vivacious. What, for instance, is more animated than the *parodos* of the *Children of Heracles?* The words which the members of the chorus exchange at first with Iolaus and subsequently with the Theban herald,[1] the protection they promise the one, the threatening injunctions they lay upon the other, constitute the very beginning of the action. And, again, in the *Orestes*, how great is the pity at once awakened by the hero of the drama, not only because he is seen asleep, with his sister watching at his pallet, but because he is the sole subject of the dialogue between Electra and the young Argive women when they come upon the stage. The finest execution of a choral song on the cruel position of Orestes would have wrung the heart less than this sorrowful dialogue, the participants in which speak in whispers, trembling lest they may waken the unhappy man whose lot they bemoan. — The impression produced by the *parodos* of the *Electra* must have been much less touching: the sentiments which the chorus expresses upon appearing are commonplace; the lyrical dialogue, moreover, is less divided, and no longer possesses the free movement of a conversation, the only two lyrical passages of the chorus constituting periods which have a symmetrical correspondence like that of the words to which they furnish the melody. Is not irregularity, as a matter of fact, better adapted for the expression of pathos than symmetry?

Euripides, however, did seek for this symmetry in certain songs in which the chorus replies to songs rendered on the stage. This occurs when the choruses have reference not to a special situation that might rouse immediate distress or anxiety, which could not be adequately expressed in strophes that were periodic, but to a general situation which precedes the events themselves of the drama. Helen and Iphigeneia in exile, the one in Egypt, the other in Taurica, lament in the presence of the women of the chorus: the former deplores the fatal outcome of the war with Troy, of whose downfall she has been apprised; the latter bewails the sup-

[1] *Children of Herac.* 73–117.

posed death of her brother Orestes and the part of a homicidal priestess which she has long been condemned to play. The past engages their attention as much as the present. But these plaintive songs, which have the character of real dirges,—especially Iphigeneia's,—must find a strong echo in the orchestra. The voices of isolated members of the chorus, following one upon the other and answering the plenitude of these mournful melodies in short musical phrases, would not have sufficed to produce the effect of profound despair which was expected. This is the reason the entire chorus joined in answering Helen and Iphigeneia. In notable contrast to this, in the *Hecuba* only the corypheus addresses Priam's spouse. In making her a messenger of grief, charged with informing the unhappy mother of the approaching sacrifice of Polyxena, the poet desired that the leader's should be the only voice to be heard.[1] This is a fresh example of the freedom with which Euripides treats the forms of the *parodos*, which are so various in his plays that there are hardly three or four which resemble one another.

This multiplicity of forms entailed a corresponding multiplicity of divisions and of rhythms. Only the *Medea* furnishes an example of the union of all the parts of which the entrance song of a chorus might be composed, as the strophe and the antistrophe are here followed by an *epode* and preceded by a *proöde*. The latter, which was designed to awaken interest, although it does not contain the melodic theme which is subsequently developed,[2] is a unique exception in Euripides' dramas, just as this part fails altogether in Sophocles. But the epode is not rare in either poet, for it lent itself readily to the conclusion of lyric passages which were to be neither too short nor too long.[3] It is once employed by Euripides, in the *parodos* of the *Phoenician Maidens*, in the same manner in which it had been used in the *parodos* of the *Agamemnon:* it does not end the song, but is placed between two parts of different rhythms,[4] and thus serves as a transition from the one

[1] *Hecuba*, 98–153.

[2] The *proöde* is dactylic; the strophe and antistrophe are logaoedic. This was not the case in Aeschylus.

[3] The longest epode is that of the *Bacchanals*, 135–167.

[4] The first pair of strophes is logaoedic (202–225); the second (239–260) is trochaic. The epode is placed in the interval (226–238).

to the other. Euripides here revives one of the resources of Aeschylus' art. But he is not obliged to display so much skill in the management and symmetrical interlacing of the various parts of the *parodos* as was his predecessor, since the elements which he employs are much fewer. One or two pairs of strophes suffice for him; he appears not to be ambitious to make his chorus sing three.[1] And sometimes he even goes so far as to suppress entirely these strophes whose number he is not willing to increase. In the *Hecuba* and *Iphigeneia in Taurica* the strophic form of the *parodos* has disappeared to make room for long anapaestic systems. No doubt there are reasons for the liberty the poet takes: the corypheus of the *Hecuba* sings alone, and in the *Iphigeneia* the use of irregular anapaests, mingled with spondees and trochees, accords well with the character of the *parodos*, which, as we have said, is a real dirge. Is the suppression of the traditional strophe in a part that is in its nature a song in which the entire chorus ought to participate a new occurrence at this period? This cannot be established; but no example of it occurs except in Euripides.

The *parodos* has freer movement than the *stasima* and is also richer in metres, if this is possible. The logaoedic element, whose preponderance in Euripides' lyrics has perhaps been exaggerated, is far from occupying as much space in the *parodos* as the sum of the other rhythms, that, when demanded, hasten obediently to do the poet's bidding. We have just observed his employment of anapaestic systems as suited his fancy; elsewhere these same anapaests are combined in regular strophes, merely divided into dialogue.[2] When this dialogue is very animated and betrays strong emotion, as in the *Children of Heracles* and *Orestes*, the dochmiac metre is called into service, to reproduce the sense of excitement. The trochaic measure, which Aeschylus loved, but Sophocles almost abandoned and used only in conjunction with other rhythms, recurs several times in Euripides, especially in the *parodos* of the *Phoenician Maidens*, where it has a character sufficiently individual to warrant the special name the metricians give it: they call it the "Euripidean metre." Again Euripides followed Aeschylus in using

[1] There is only one example of this, in the *Bacchanals;* for that in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* is probably the result of revision or interpolation.

[2] In the *Daughters of Troy.*

the Ionic measure, with an eye to the effects peculiar to this sort of rhythms. Above all, like the poet of the *Suppliants* and *Persians*, he desires that the variation or growth of feeling experienced by the chorus in the course of the *parodos* shall be rendered by means of changes of rhythm. Thus—to cite only one example—the first two strophes of the *Bacchanals*, which are Ionic, are followed by a logaoedic strophe, antistrophe and epode. Only a close study of the Greek text would enable us to understand the relation which this succession of different rhythms bears to the sentiments which the song by turns expresses. This shift of rhythms, moreover, is not unusual in Sophocles. The second part of the *parodos* of the *Oedipus at Colonus*, in particular, is so irregular that it contains not less than five different metres. In this matter, even more than in others, it is impossible to see wherein Euripides can have differed from his rival, and we must be content to admire the marvellous wealth of resources which the writers of tragedy, in their rôle of lyric poets, had at their disposal whenever they were called upon to express either the fluctuations or the various shades of feeling and passion.

Since the first song of the chorus sometimes assumes the form of a lyrical dialogue with the actors, we need not be surprised to meet with this same form in the course of the play, when the action has advanced and the members of the chorus, overcome by the emotions the drama excites, cannot with verisimilitude maintain the calmness required in the proper execution of a regular song, but let the tumult of their individual impressions freely break forth. Such of these *commoi* as best deserve their name are veritable lamentations, which remind us of the wailings of Greek women at the time of a funeral. The dirges in the *Seven against Thebes*, the *Choephori*, and above all the *Persians*, where Aeschylus desired Athenian ears should hear the airs sung by Asiatic mourners,[1] doubtless owed something to popular tradition about those funeral chants of which the end of the twenty-fourth book of the *Iliad* gives some idea. In these the melody was necessarily of greater importance than the poetry. Is it for this reason that Sophocles did not attempt this style of composition, which, however, is suggested for a moment by the scene in which Electra re-

[1] *Persians*, 936, 937, Weil: κακομέλετον ἰὰν Μαριανδυνοῦ θρηνητῆρος.

plies with interjections and groans of grief to the members of the chorus, who try to console her when Orestes' death is announced? All that we can say is that the funeral *commoi*, which are lacking in Sophocles, are found in Euripides.

Theseus before the dead body of Phaedra, Peleus beside the corpse of Neoptolemus, Hecuba before the remains of Astyanax, Adrastus before the bodies of the Argive leaders, chant in dochmiac or iambic rhythm, so appropriate for the expression of the anguish and agony of grief, a plaintive hymn in which more or less all of the members of the chorus join. In the *Andromache*, if the members of the chorus interrupt Peleus' lamentations, it is less in order to mourn with him for the dead whom they behold than to offer words of sympathy and consolation to the aged man. The dirge—properly speaking—is sung by Peleus rather than by them.[1] The chief rôle in the *commos* of the *Hippolytus* likewise belongs to Theseus, whose prolonged lamentation is merely framed in between two short passages sung by the chorus.[2] But in the *Daughters of Troy* the women who lament over the bleeding corpse of Astyanax interrupt their farewell to the dead youth with piercing cries,—"Alas and alas!"—repeated and sustained, which reawaken and cause a new outburst of Hecuba's despair;[3] and the same cry is reëchoed at the end of the drama, when these women wail in alternation with their queen over another corpse,—that of Troy.[4] The funereal character of the *commos* is marked even more strongly, if possible, in two passages of this kind in the *Suppliants*, especially in the first, in which not only the strophes, but even single verses are frequently broken and divided in a dialogue in which impatient emotions urgently demand expression.[5] In the second of these passages, the grief of the mourners has lost the intensity of its first moments, after the ceremony at the funeral pyre, and changed to tenderness; in consequence of its calmer character the strophes are at first divided into

[1] *Hippol.* 1173–1225, Nauck.

[2] *Hippol.* 811–855. The chorus sings only seven verses at the beginning and seven at the end; Theseus sings sixteen verses twice.

[3] *Daught. of Troy*, 1216–1259.

[4] *Daught. of Troy*, 1287 *et seq.*

[5] *Suppl.* 798–836, Wilamowitz (*Analecta*). Views differ about the distribution of this *commos* among the members of the chorus. See Arnoldt, *Chorische Technik*, p. 265.

two symmetrical parts of three and four verses,[1] and acquire a more animated movement only at the close, through the natural growth of an emotion which excites itself in the act of expression. Thus the funeral *commoi* in Euripides assumed extremely varied forms. Although they did not produce the powerful effect of the great dirges in Aeschylus, which were far more prolonged, they must still have been very pathetic. The skilful management of the different parts of the song and of the succession, slow or fast, of the voices; the melodies, plaintive or heart-rending, which we glimpse behind the most insignificant poetic phrases or simple interjections; a marvellous art which we divine although we cannot discern its methods,—no doubt enabled Euripides to stir the heart so much the more profoundly as these funeral chants on the stage recalled the realities of daily life.

Not all Euripides' *commoi* are of this character. For the most part they are not sung over the dead, but originate, as in Sophocles, merely from situations which distress at the same time both the members of the chorus and the actors. But as the emotion which some feel is not always so intense as that of others, this dialogue between the orchestra and stage may be lyrical only in part. Occasionally iambic trimeters, which are calmer in their nature and were declaimed in ordinary tone, respond to very agitated dochmiac systems, to the stir of passion which breaks forth in the form of song. The poet understands how to secure the happiest results from these contrasts: sometimes he prolongs them during the whole passage; at other times the increase or the abatement of troubled feeling effects, at short intervals, the transition from declamation to song, or from song to declamation. But when feeling is at its height, and it is impossible that the chorus should not be almost as greatly agitated as the actors, then, following the tradition established by Aeschylus, the dialogue becomes entirely lyrical. The chorus in the *Electra*, at sight of Aegisthus' body, and especially of Clytemnestra's, who has just been slain by her children, could not preserve a controlled bearing; the dialogue which ensues between the three speakers is in the same pitch

[1] On the division of this *commos*, sung by the mothers and by the children who bring in the ashes of their fathers (1123–1164), see Arnoldt's discussion, pp. 266–271.

throughout; it consists from one end to the other of iambic strophes, whose continuity is intended to produce a single impression.[1] In this passage, as in all other *commoi*, we should like to know how the song was distributed among the members of the chorus, since dialogue presupposes not a group of voices, however weak, but individual voices. Can our curiosity be satisfied? A close and very minute study has led Arnoldt to conclude that the part of the chorus in the *commoi* must have been distributed, either among three voices, those of the corypheus and the leaders of the half choruses, or among five voices, which would be those of the members of the chorus in the first row, who were more talented and more experienced than the others. But however great the desire we feel to ascertain every fact, and however alluring this hypothesis may be, we see clearly, on making a detailed examination, that it cannot be laid down as an absolute rule. It is nevertheless certain that, in the *commoi* of Euripides as in those of Sophocles, which do not differ materially from them, the choruses were usually rendered by several different voices[2] and that this gave the song greater variety and the lyrical dialogue more life.

By the side of the *commoi*, which are less regular than the *stasima*, but were indispensable, as it appears, to tragedy in the time of Sophocles and Euripides, there are more rarely found lyrical passages of quite another character, the *hyporchemes*, choral songs accompanied by a special kind of dance. Perhaps we should be nearer to the truth, if not to etymology, in defining the *hyporcheme* as a dance accompanied by songs, since the song was only an accessory. However that may be, this dance bore no resemblance

1 *Electra*, 1177–1231.

2 This distribution of the voices of the chorus was sometimes carried very far; for example, in the *commos* of the *Medea*, 1251–1292, where probably seventeen different voices were heard (those of the two children and of each of the fifteen members of the chorus), as also in the *parodos* of the *Alphabetical Tragedy* by Callias, in which the seventeen consonants rendered successively seventeen *commata*. O. Hense (*Rhein. Museum*, 1876, pp. 582–601, *Die A B C Tragödie des Callias und die Medea des Euripides*) has well shown that it was Callias, the comic poet, who wished to make fun of Euripides, and not Euripides, as Clearchus, one of Aristotle's disciples (Athen. vii, p. 276 a), claimed, who imitated Callias in the distribution of his choral song. — Similarly, in a *commos* of the *Oedipus at Colonus*, 1447–1499, Oedipus and Antigone engage in a dialogue with the fifteen members of the chorus, who speak one after the other. See Muff, *Die chorische Technik des Sophocles*, pp. 317, 318.

to that which often accompanied the other lyrical parts of tragedy,[1] the noble *emmeleia*, which, even when it had to interpret strong emotions, never lost its poise and grave dignity, and appears to have been in general less a dance, in the sense in which the word is now understood, than a rhythmic march. The *hyporcheme* has a very different movement; the engaging liveliness of the rhythms it accompanies demands motions so rapid and impetuous that it is hard to believe that the same person was able to sing and dance at the same time: the chorus must have been divided[2] in order that its members might fulfil the double function. It would be useless to try to discover the secret of the tragic *hyporcheme*. Some years ago Buchholz published a book of nearly two hundred pages on the *Art of Dancing in Euripides*,[3] which compels our admiration: we wonder at the vivacity of the author's imagination and the acuteness of his intellect in the field of conjecture. Probably we shall never know, either as to the *hyporcheme* or as to the *emmeleia*, what was the exact correspondence between the steps (φοραί) and the metres, and especially how in this mimetic dance[4] the figures (σχήματα) and gestures (δείξεις) interpreted the sentiments expressed by the song. But the impassioned character of the *hyporcheme*, as it is found in Sophocles and Euripides, is beyond all doubt; for it is to be noted that there is no example of it in Aeschylus. The passion with which it is replete is an exalted joy, which requires for its expression all the means that a human being commands: at the shrill notes of the flute, all together, in time with the same rhythmic beat, feet begin to move, arms and hands are set in motion, voices sing. This joy which is called forth by happy events

[1] In consequence of a wrong interpretation of the word στάσιμον, dancing has been thought not to have accompanied this particular kind of song. But allusions to the dance of the *stasima* are found in Aeschylus (*Eumenides*, 307) and in Sophocles (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 896; *Ajax*, 693). That a dance accompanied the *parodos* is positively established only for comedy (in the *Peace* and *Plutus* of Aristophanes); we cannot draw from this sure conclusions for tragedy. But dancing seems to have accompanied certain *commoi* (cf. Muff, *loc. cit.* p. 42).

[2] Cf. Lucian's remarks *On Dancing*, 30.

[3] *Die Tanzkunst des Euripides*, Leipzig, Teubner, 1871.

[4] The mimetic character of the *hyporcheme*, which originated in Crete (Simonides of Ceus, fragm. 31, Κρῆτά μιν καλέοισι τρόπον), is vouched for by more than one passage in ancient authors. Athen. i, 15 d, ἡ τοιαύτη ὄρχησις μίμησις τῶν ὑπὸ τῆς λέξεως ἑρμηνευομένων πραγμάτων. Plut. Quaest. Con. ix, 15, 2.

may become very dramatic. Sophocles was careful to place his *hyporchemes* immediately before a disaster[1] or before an impending catastrophe.[2] This effect of thrilling contrast was rarely sought by Euripides,[3] who conceived an effect quite different. In the *Electra* it is after the murder of Aegisthus; in the *Heracles*, after that of Lycus; in the *Bacchanals*, after the death of Pentheus on Cithaeron, that the chorus, at the risk of appearing pitiless, begins to dance. No doubt the victims of these catastrophes deserve no commiseration, and their fall is an occasion of triumph for the principal character, whose feelings the chorus shares. Nevertheless, these outbursts of savage joy, not far removed from a dead body which is not seen as yet, but will presently be brought upon the stage, have something violent and shocking about them which betrays an art less skilful than that of Sophocles. But Euripides did not abuse this means of effect, since in all his dramas we find only three or four short *hyporchemes*. Their number is too small to enable us to institute a profitable comparison between them and the *hyporchemes* of Sophocles, to which they are very similar, both in their tone and in their rhythm.[4]

Shall we speak of the short passages which conclude Euripides' tragedies and which the tradition of the manuscripts allots to the chorus? When the drama is ended, the chorus leaves the platform in the orchestra on its way to the door of exit, in an order that is regular, but has nothing of the pomp of the procession in the *Seven against Thebes* nor of that in the *Eumenides*. No long song, as in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, in fact no song at all. The chorus simply withdraws, leaving to its leader the task of reciting one or two anapaestic phrases which contain hopes of victory, or

1 *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1086–1109; *Antigone*, 1115–1154, invocation to Bacchus, which is certainly a *hyporcheme*, as Muff has shown, *loc. cit.* p. 116. These *hyporchemes* take the place of the *stasima*, and separate two episodes.

2 *Ajax*, 693–718.

3 The only example of it occurs in the *Phaethon*, where the hymeneal song precedes the announcement of the catastrophe.

4 Gevaert (*Histoire de la musique*, vol. ii, pp. 434, 435) does, however, distinguish in the *hyporcheme* of the *Bacchanals* several rhythmical *metabolai*, to which harmonic *metabolai* are supposed to correspond (1st, bacchic rhythm and Phrygian mode; 2d, iambic trimeter and Dorian mode; 3d, logaoedics and Lydian mode, etc.), which would give this passage a character more varied than that of the *hyporchemes* in Sophocles.

stereotyped reflections, more or less trite, on the unexpectedness of the events of the play. These passages, which are always short, do not deserve to engage our attention. Several of them are not by the poet's hand. Little by little the chorus was forced to give way to the actors on the stage; since that time its mediation has not been needed to convey the impression produced by the dénouement on the souls of the spectators. The closing song of ancient tragedy has disappeared.

The members of the chorus marched from the orchestra, preceded by the musician who had accompanied their songs.[1] We know that the instrumental accompaniment of the tragic choruses was entirely subordinated to the vocal melody, to which it merely gave a discreet support, and that it was extremely simple; it was limited to a single instrument which was not always the flute—as may readily be admitted. The "hymns without lyre" of which some tragic characters[2] speak should be sufficient proof that the lyre was used, in certain cases, to accompany the songs of the chorus. Furthermore in the *Frogs*, does not Aeschylus, when he makes ready to parody the airs of Euripides' music, call out: "Come! Bring me my lyre!"[3] The use of this instrument is clearly proved for some of the tragedies of our poet by an interesting passage in Sextus Empiricus, which we must quote: "Formerly, Homer's verses were chanted to the accompaniment of the lyre; this instrument accompanied also the songs of tragedy, especially those that contain a philosophical speculation, such as the following: 'Earth, greatest of deities, and Aether of Zeus;'" and the philosopher quotes a whole series of verses from a chorus of the *Chrysippus*.[4] If, therefore, this testimony is trustworthy, while the flute blended its flexible and penetrating tones with the plaintive or impassioned melodies of tragedy, the less expressive lyre, whose tones were pure and grave, sufficed for those songs which expressed ideas rather than emotions. As this kind of song was, even in Euripides, less frequent than the others, the lyre came into

[1] Schol. Aristoph. *Wasps*, 582.

[2] Aesch. *Agam.* 990. Eurip. *Helen*, 185; *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, 146.

[3] *Frogs*, 1304, and schol. 1302, 1305. In the *Thesmoph.* 137, 138, Agathon has, as attributes of a tragic poet, a *lyre* and a *barbiton*.

[4] Sextus Empiricus, p. 751, 21. This is fragment 839, Nauck.

use less often than the flute. But did it happen that in the same tragedy the melodies of the chorus, according to the character of the words to which they were set, were accompanied in turn either by the flute or by the lyre, and that the same musician played the one instrument or the other, as the case demanded? This is a question which, in the absence of documentary evidence, we must be content merely to propose.

II

THE POETRY OF THE CHORUSES
IDEAS AND IMAGERY

We have studied the forms of the tragic chorus in Euripides, and must now examine the contents of these forms, the poetry which they embody. Choral poetry may be considered from two points of view, its ideas and its imagery. The ideas that are expressed in lyrical form are not without importance in a poet like Euripides, who does not mean to be effaced by his *dramatis personae*, but makes use of the theatre to give his own opinions and views currency and potency. Let us, therefore, determine what these ideas are.

If we may believe Pollux, the tragic chorus must sometimes have resembled the *parabasis* of comedy, in which the poet addresses the spectators in the person of the corypheus. He says, "Sophocles makes this use of the chorus very rarely, for example, in his *Hipponoüs*, but it is common in the dramas of Euripides." And he cites the *Danaè*, in which the chorus, consisting of women, forgot its sex and spoke in the masculine gender because it spoke in the name of the poet.[1] This reason is not convincing, and the use of masculine forms which surprised Pollux is met with also in other plays[2] where the expression of the women's thought assumes a general character. There is in reality no *parabasis* in Euripides, who nowhere makes use of the corypheus to bring himself[3]

[1] *Onomasticon*, iv, 111.

[2] The chorus of women in the *Hippolytus* speaks in the masculine gender in verse 1105. Cf. W. Dindorf's note on this verse.

[3] It is very doubtful whether the old men of the chorus in the *Heracles*, in 673 *et seq.*, allude to the poet, who at that time was not yet very old and who wrote tragedies for seventeen or eighteen years after the *Heracles*. On the approximate date of the play, see von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Herakles*, i, 348, 349.

and his affairs before the public. But what gave rise to this remark of Pollux is the often repeated observation of ancient commentators that the members of the chorus in Euripides' tragedies occasionally express ideas which are consonant neither with their position nor with their character, but are the views of the poet.

Euripides, it would seem, should have been at greater liberty to express these personal ideas in the choruses, where he is not hampered by the plot, than in other parts of the drama. But how could he, without offensive improbability, attribute thoughts of a high order to common people, such as the members of the chorus? The heroes on the stage, who are beings superior by nature, may well afford to be learned (σοφοί), but not the common people.[1] Euripides was conscious of these difficulties; when the members of his chorus are about to use language too lofty or make remarks too profound, they begin by excusing themselves and asking indulgence for the rather unexpected discussion upon which they are about to enter. Hear the corypheus of the *Medea:*

"Full oft ere this my soul hath scaled
Lone heights of thought, empyrean steeps,
Or plunged far down the darkling deeps,
Where woman's feebler heart hath failed.

"Yet wherefore failed? Should woman find
No inspiration thrill her breast,
Nor welcome ever that sweet guest
Of Song, that uttereth Wisdom's mind?

"Alas! not all! Few, few are they, —
Perchance amid a thousand one
Thou shouldest find, — for whom the sun
Of poesy makes an inner day."[2]

This corypheus is a sort of wise woman, who is aware of her knowledge and conscious of the superiority which distinguishes her from the majority of her sex. The corypheus of the *Alcestis*, before singing with his comrades about Necessity, a deity of the

[1] Aristotle (*Problems*, 48) makes the following remark: "The actors on the stage represent the heroes; now, among the ancients, the leaders were always heroes; those who obeyed them were men, and the chorus is composed of *men*."

[2] *Medea*, 1081–1089.

philosophers that had no altars in Greece, thinks it prudent, in order to forestall surprise, to declare:

> "I have lifted mine heart to the skies,
> I have searched all truth with mine eyes."[1]

These precautions which the poet takes seem to show that he does not intend to make improper use of the chorus in order to express his own ideas. In fact, his personal views are met with less frequently in the lyrics than in the dialogue. The two strophes in honor of Anagkè, the cosmogonic fragment of the *Chrysippus*, the criticism of the legend of the golden lamb, the expression of doubts about divine[2] providence that occur here and there, two or three reflections which appear irrelevant—this is all that can be set down to the philosophizing disposition of the poet in the choruses of Euripides.[3]

It is not much, if we take into account the total amount he produced, which is very great, but it is enough to distinguish the poetry of his choruses from that of the other tragic writers with reference to the topic now under consideration. The members of the chorus in Aeschylus and Sophocles are reverent of the gods under all circumstances; they tremble before them or invoke their aid in averting the misfortunes which threaten the heroes on the stage; they have no feeling of rebellion or of anger against them. They have full faith in the fables of mythology which they have received from tradition, and whenever they recall them they do this with simple and believing hearts. Their moral ideas are those that were current in their day, and they express them with great nobility and do not introduce into them refinements or subtleties. On the other hand, Euripides' chorus sometimes is what the poet himself is,—a reasoner and a philosopher.

[1] *Alcestis*, 962–964, Weil.

[2] We have had occasion to point out these passages in the first part of this volume, chap. i and chap. ii. There is no need to cite them again here.

[3] Mahaffy (*Class. Gr. Lit., Dramatic Poets*, p. 100) thinks that he has observed that the poet's personal views are found "in the first strophe and antistrophe of his choruses, which usually express general sentiments." This observation is not always borne out by the facts. It is in the second antistrophe of the second *stasimon* of the *Electra* that the chorus says it does not believe in the miracle of the golden lamb nor of the sun changing its direction. The reproach made by the chorus of the *Daughters of Troy* against Zeus (845 *et seq.*) is likewise found in the second antistrophe.

When he forgets to philosophize in his choruses—and this happens very often—Euripides develops moral ideas that do not differ at all in themselves from those expressed by the other tragic writers; he merely develops them less fully and with less force than Aeschylus, and in a less connected manner than Sophocles. Not a single lyric can be found in his plays which, like the first *stasimon* of the *Antigone*, is completely engrossed with a single abstract idea; his choruses are not of that tenor. Does he lack skill in the art of unfolding ideas and in showing their larger meaning? It is more correct to say that he made it a rule, in his choruses, to avoid prolonging abstractions unduly. If he enunciates a general thought in the first pair of strophes, he hastens, in the second, either to show its application to the drama, or else to seek its confirmation in examples borrowed from the legendary history of the past. When the members of the chorus in the *Hippolytus* have asked themselves what men should think of divine providence, they promptly let it be seen that these remarks were inspired by the undeserved exile of Theseus' son.[1] The same women sing in strophe and antistrophe of the fatal power of Eros, only that they may evoke, in another strophe and antistrophe that balance the first pair, the picture of the fatal union of Iole and Heracles and again of Semele and Zeus.[2] The conception is abstract at first, but the exposition becomes concrete; still, though the tone is changed, the impression is single, as the theme remains the same. It is true that this quest after variety of tone, when carried to an extreme, sometimes has a different effect. We might quote passages in which the chorus, with singular ease, leaps from one idea to another, from strophe to strophe, amusing and distracting the mind by its caprices, and in the end leaving upon it only slight and superficial impressions. Passages of this kind, however, are quite rare and exceptional[3] and therefore should not serve to characterize the art of Euripides.

This philosopher grants little space to philosophy in the songs

[1] Third *stasimon*, 1102–1150.

[2] First *stasimon*, 525–544, first strophe and antistrophe. The illustrations are in the second strophe and antistrophe, 545–564.

[3] We are able to cite only the second *stasimon* of the *Heracles*, 637–700; the third of the *Children of Heracles*, 892–927, and of the *Andromache*, 766–801; the first of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, 393–455, Weil.

of his choruses; the part devoted to dramatic emotions, and especially to pictures and images, is much larger than that appropriated to abstract reflections.

The song of the Argive mothers before the dead bodies of their sons affords us an example of a lamentation developed at length:

"Crowned with fair sons above others
No more am I seen,
Neither blessed mid Argive mothers;
Nor the Travail-queen
To the childless shall give fair greeting!
Forlorn is my life, as the fleeting
Clouds that flee fast from the beating
Of the storm-scourges keen.

"Seven mothers — and heroes seven
To our sorrow we bare:
None princelier to Argos were given.
Now in childless despair
Drear old age creepeth upon me;
Yet the ranks of the dead have not known me,
Nor the count of the living may own me;
But an outcast I fare.

"For me are but tears remaining:
Saddest memorials rest
In mine halls of my son — shorn hair
For mourning, and garlands are there;
Libations — for dead lips' draining;
Songs — which the golden-tressed
Apollo shall turn from in scorn;
And with wails shall I greet each morn,
Ever drenching with tears fast raining
The vesture-folds on my breast."[1]

The expression of feeling is not simple throughout this passage, and it is not nature only that speaks; but the flood of grief pours forth in it with the fulness and abundance which beseems women. Elsewhere, when this same chorus is awaiting events and is mastered by anxiety, its shorter songs, — divided into iambic strophes of four verses, — its brief, broken phrases, betray by their form the feelings by which it is possessed.[2] Impassioned songs, animated by

[1] *Suppliants*, 955–979, Nauck.

[2] In the first *stasimon*, 365–380.

a powerful emotion and swept along by a rapid movement, are therefore not so foreign to Euripides' plays as is generally supposed. Not to speak of the *Bacchanals*, which will occupy our attention later, need we call to mind the eager hopes of victory of the chorus in the *Children of Heracles*[1] and its insistent invocation of the protecting gods? Need we quote the supplication which the chorus in the *Orestes* addresses to the Erinyes?

"Terrible Ones of the on-rushing feet,
Of the pinions far-sailing,
Through whose dance-revel, held where no Bacchanals meet,
Ringeth weeping and wailing,
Swart-hued Eumenides, wide 'neath the dome
Of the firmament soaring,
Avenging, avenging blood-guilt,—lo, I come,
Imploring, imploring!—
To the son of Atreides vouchsafe to forget
His frenzy of raving."[2]

It also sometimes happens that when a sudden change of fortune or catastrophe impends, the chorus, which knows the event that is about to take place in consequence of its position as a constant witness of the drama, pictures it to itself, at the very moment when it is occurring, with such lifelikeness that we seem to see it and are already distressed by it. Just at the moment the daughter of Creon behind the scenes puts on the poisonous robe sent by Medea, the chorus, close to the stage, sings:

"The bride shall receive it, the diadem-garland that beareth enfolden
Doom for the hapless mid glittering sheen:
And to set the adorning of Hades about her tresses golden
She shall take it her hands between.

"For its glamour of beauty, its splendour unearthly, shall swiftly persuade her
To bedeck her with robe and with gold-wrought crown: she shall soon have arrayed her
In attire as a bride in the presence of phantoms from Hades uprisen;
In such dread gin shall her feet be ta'en;
In the weird of death shall the hapless be whelmed, and from Doom's dark prison
Shall she steal forth never again."[3]

[1] *Children of Heracles*, 748–783.
[2] *Orestes*, 316–327, Weil.
[3] *Medea*, 978–989.

The messenger when he arrives will add to the effect produced by these words the impression which the painful details of the actual death-scene will give with greater force; but the terrible event which he is about to describe has already been anticipated in imagination, in its entirety, by the chorus. Similarly in the *Ion*, where the circumstances are different, the servants of Creusa picture to themselves in advance the tears and lamentations of their mistress, when she shall learn of the existence of a son of her husband, and they are even now overcome by her grief.[1] Is it necessary to adduce other examples, to show that, although dramatic emotion does not prevail in all the *stasima* of Euripides' choruses, it does appear in several?

The descriptive element, however, is what predominates in this kind of passage. If the chorus of the *Ion* is ravished by the artistic wonders of the frieze of the temple at Delphi, if the chorus of the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* gives a long account of what it has seen while passing before the encampment of the Greeks, that is pure chatter, if you like, with which the poet appears to have amused himself in giving a faithful picture of the vain curiosity of women. But these songs are *parodoi*, a fact that palliates their shortcomings, and no others of the same character occur. As a rule, Euripides' lyrical descriptions are anything but idle or futile, and several of them are incomparably charming and brilliant. Their chief inspiration and life are the myths, those smiling or sombre legends of the past which the dramatic situations bring incessantly to the tragic poet's mind and which Euripides is no more disposed to forget than are his rivals. But whereas Sophocles deals with the myths in a summary manner,[2] usually in one strophe, or whereas he merely indicates them with a few rapid strokes[3] in passing, Euripides lingers over them, takes pleasure in letting his imagination dwell upon them, and brings out their details with a power that makes them live again.

Nothing was more celebrated in antiquity than the scene in

[1] Second *stasimon* (dochmiac strophes), 676 *et seq.*

[2] In the *Trachiniae*, the account of the struggle between Achelous and Heracles for the possession of Deïaneira (503–530) is developed by the chorus at some length; but this account is connected with the subject of the play itself.

[3] Four verses, for example, suffice, when the chorus of the *Philoctetes* (676–680) recalls the torture of Ixion bound on the wheel.

which the *Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* on Mt. Pelion was described. And yet, neither the verses of Pindar in his fifth *Nemean* ode, nor the *Epithalamium* of Catullus, nor the large amphora in the Museum of Florence, give us a picture of it equal to that which Euripides has drawn in a chorus of his *Iphigeneia:*

"O what bridal-chant rang with the crying
Of the Libyan flute,
With the footfall of dancers replying
To the voice of the lute,
With the thrill of the reeds' glad greeting,
In the day when o'er Pelion fleeting
Unto Peleus' espousals, with beating
Of golden-shod foot,
The beautiful-tressed Song-maidens
To the Gods' feast came,
And their bridal-hymn's ravishing cadence
Bore Thetis' fame
O'er the hills of the Centaurs far-pealing,
Through the woodlands of Pelion soft-stealing,
The new-born splendour revealing
Of the Aiakid's name!
And Dardanus' child, whom the pinion
Of the eagle bore
From Phrygia, Ganymede, minion
Of Zeus, did pour
From the gold's depths nectar; while dancing
Feet of the Sea-maids were glancing
Through circles, through mazes entrancing
The white sands o'er.

"Leaf-crowned came the Centaur riders
With their lances of pine
To the feast of the Heaven-abiders,
And the bowls of their wine."[1]

This brilliant and animated scene with its many characters and its varied harmonies, this ideal feast, such as Greeks could dream of, is nowhere else described as it is here. We are indebted likewise to a chorus of Euripides for the most unique description bequeathed to us by antiquity of that wonderful region of the West toward which the imagination, fleeing from the hardships

[1] *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, 1036–1061.

of actual life, sometimes loved to fly, there to lose itself in the dazzling radiance of a glorious vision:

"... the strand where the apples are growing
Of the Hesperid chanters kept in ward,
Where the path over Ocean purple-glowing
By the Sea's Lord is to the seafarer barred!
O to light where Atlas hath aye in his keeping
The bourn twixt earth and the heavens bestarred,
Where the fountains ambrosial sunward are leaping
By the couches where Zeus in his halls lieth sleeping,
Where the bounty of Earth the life-bestowing
The bliss of the Gods ever higher is heaping!"[1]

The Greek strophe here possesses the abundance, the fulness, the wealth, demanded by its subject.

The poet displays the same power when he wishes to depict real countries which have been the scenes of divine legends. Such is that Boeotian rural scene in which the extraordinary birth of Dionysus is placed; that bountiful countryside, with its luxuriant vegetation, its fresh pastures and cool springs, "its green waters"[2] whose limpid surface reflects the color of their banks. We readily imagine that Euripides must have strolled through the Theban country, that his eyes have been rested by looking upon the verdant banks of Dirce and Ismenus, or by plunging into the clear depths of their streams. Nor does he separate the story of the judgment of Paris on Mt. Ida from its surroundings: the three goddesses do not make him forget the mountain and its icy springs, its black forest-tresses, the ivy which overruns the trunks of the trees, and the scattered flocks that browse near the summits, to the sound of the rustic pipe.[3] Thus the myths which he falls in with on his way are so many suggestions of pictures, which are only rapid sketches, but still open for us agreeable vistas of the landscape which Aeschylus barely shows us behind his heroes or gods, and which appears only once in Sophocles.[4]

The sea which surrounds and indents the shores of Greece,

[1] *Hippolytus*, 742–751.

[2] *Phoenician Women*, 659, ῥέεθρα χλοερά. Cf. 645–648, 826.

[3] *Androm.* 284–286. *Daughters of Troy*, 1066 *et seq.* *Iphig. at Aulis*, 573 *et seq.*

[4] In the famous chorus of the *Oedipus at Colonus*, 670–678, 681–691.

which can be seen from all its hilltops, which is the route of all voyages, the sea now gentle and again terrible to man, should suggest by its charms as well as its wrath many an image to choral poetry. In Sophocles, however, it is less an object to be described than a term of comparison. The fate of Heracles reminds the chorus of waves agitated by the blast of the winds; Oedipus' hard fate awakens the idea of a rocky shore beaten by the tempest; the calamities that befall families are likened to the surging and furious waves that break crashing upon the shore.[1] The poet is struck by the spectacle of the sea merely because of the analogies to human life which it affords. Euripides, on the contrary, sometimes describes it for its own sake; above all it suggests to him brilliant pictures that please; that which he excels in painting is the smiling sea, alive and peopled with its denizens: dolphins attracted by the sound of the flute, leaping round the ship; Nereids dancing in cadence near the shore; Galaneia, the nymph with the blue eyes, whose voice invites the mariners to spread their sails to the slightest breeze and to lay hold on their oars.[2] Euripides' choruses also invoke, as if they were persons, the sea breeze which impels the vessels along their course across the waters; the halcyon that laments in sad complaint near the steep rocks, and the birds of passage, flying in flocks in the mist above the waters as they migrate to a milder sky.[3] These various touches express all the poetry of the sea of Greece, in its days of joyous serenity.

The laughing pictures in which the lyrics of Euripides delight are suggested to him also by other subjects. Twice he finds occasion to recall to mind the religious festivals whose splendor so greatly rejoiced the hearts of the Greeks, and immediately he portrays the vivid impression they produced. He shows us first the young Athenian women beating the earth in cadenced dance and crying aloud in honor of Athena,[4] during the whole night, on the plateau of the Acropolis, "the wind-haunted hill;" and again his bold imagination pictures for us how, at the solemnities at Eleusis, the pleasure of man is communicated to all nature, when

[1] *Trachin.* 112 *et seq. Oedip. at Colon.* 1239–1248. *Antig.* 582–592.
[2] *Electra,* 434–437. *Helen,* 1451–1462.
[3] *Hecuba,* 444–447. *Iphig. in Taur.* 1089–1091. *Helen,* 1479–1488.
[4] *Children of Heracles,* 778–783.

not only the Nereids form into dancing bands at sea or near the eddies of ever flowing rivers, but even the moon and the starry sky itself, possessed and swept away by the general transport, begin to dance at the hour when on earth the mystics leap and sing as they celebrate the Great Goddesses.[1] Pictures such as these were of a kind to enchant the Athenians; but how much more were they delighted by the praises the poet sings of the happy land of Attica in a chorus of his *Medea*,—praises as flattering as they are delicate, in which sober judgment is disguised in graceful poetry, and intermingled mythological fancies set the mind afloat in a delicious atmosphere between dreams and reality:

"O happy the race in the ages olden
Of Erechtheus, the seed of the blest Gods' line,
In a land unravaged, peace-enfolden,
Aye quaffing of Wisdom's glorious wine,
Ever through air clear-shining brightly
As on wings uplifted pacing lightly,
Where they tell how Harmonia of tresses golden
Bare the Pierid Muses, the stainless Nine.

"And the streams of Cephisus the lovely-flowing
They tell how the Lady of Cyprus drew,
And in Zephyr-wafts of the winds sweet-blowing
Breathed far over the land their dew.
And she sendeth her Loves which, throned in glory
By Wisdom, fashion all virtue's story,
Over her tresses throwing, throwing,
Roses in odorous wreaths aye new."[2]

The grace which Euripides displays in more than one of his choruses sometimes serves him in producing effects by contrast. The memory of the last night of Troy could not but waken feelings of despair and images of desolation in the souls of the women in the chorus of the *Hecuba*. But their despair is rendered more striking by the art of the poet, who brings us into the interior of a Trojan home at the moment of the catastrophe. The hour is midnight. The husband has returned home after a joyful banquet, and lies asleep at full length on his couch, his war-lance hung up on the wall. His wife arranges her hair before a mirror, and pre-

[1] *Ion*, 1078–1086.

[2] *Medea*, 824–845.

pares for the night, when suddenly a great tumult fills the streets and the cries of the Greeks are heard. She flies half clad to embrace the altar of Artemis, whom she invokes in vain; she sees her husband slain before her very eyes, is made prisoner, and is soon borne away over the broad seas, whence she looks back for the last time upon the Trojan shore and feels herself swooning in despair.[1] This intimate family scene, abruptly followed by the terrible disaster, gives to the capture of Troy, of which we get an individual impression, a character of more striking reality.

Euripides' talent for description in his choruses, however, does not consist entirely in airy grace and exquisite delicacy; his lyrics are occasionally powerful and brilliant. What vigor in this rapid sketch of the marriage of Heracles and Iole!—

> "For I call to remembrance Oechalia's daughter,
> Who, ere Love 'neath his tyrannous car-yoke had brought her,
> Had been spouseless and free — overseas how she hasted,
> When Cypris the dear yoke of home had disparted,
> Like a bacchanal fiend out of hell that hath darted,
> And with blood, and with smoke of a palace flame-wasted,
> And with death-shrieks for hymns at her bridal-feast chanted,
> By Love's Queen to the son of Alcmena was granted —
> Woe, woe for the joys of espousal she tasted!"[2]

And again what life in these strophes of a *stasimon* of the *Heracles:*

> "The dances, the dances are reeling, the shout of the banqueters pealing
> Through Thebes, through the city divine.
> Now from affliction of tears cometh severance;
> Now from the thraldom of woe is deliverance,
> And song is their heir.
> Gone is the tyrant, the upstart craven . . .
>
> "Deck thee with garlands, Ismenus, and ye
> Break forth into dancing,
> Streets stately with Thebes' fair masonry,
> And Dirce bright-glancing:
>
> "Come, Maids of Asopus, to us; from the spring
> Come ye of your father;
> Of Heracles' glorious triumph to sing,
> Nymph-chorus, O gather.

[1] *Hecuba*, 914–941.

[2] *Hippolytus*, 545–554.

"Pythian forest-peak, Helicon's steep
Of the Song-queens haunted,
To my town, to my walls, let the song-echoes leap
Of the strains loud-chanted."[1]

Above all it is Dionysiac religious feeling that gives Euripides' poetry its glow of enthusiasm by communicating to it its own ardor and ecstasy. Even in the *Helen* the chorus extols the potent virtue of the fawn-skin, the verdant ivy that winds about the sacred fennel-wand, locks loosened by the ecstasy of Bromius, and the night-festivals of the goddess Cybele.[2] In the *Bacchanals*, as was to be expected, the same images—only more intense, more brilliant—throng into the minds of the chorus, with an impetuousness that carries away the souls as well as the bodies of the worshippers of Bacchus. At first they sing of the joy which their mystic union with the god affords them; then they address an urgent appeal to the city of Thebes which they desire to win—as they do the whole world—for their master.

"Thebes, nursing-town of Semele, crown
With the ivy thy brows, and be
All bloom, embowered in the starry-flowered
Lush green of the briony,
While the oak and pine thy tresses entwine
In thy bacchanal-ecstasy.

"And thy fawn-skin flecked, with a fringe be it decked
Of wool white-glistering
In silvery tassels;—O Bacchus' vassals,
High-tossed let the wild wands swing!
One dancing-band shall be all the land
When, led by the Clamour-king,

"His revel-rout fills the hills—the hills
Where thy women abide till he come
Whom the Vine-god chasing, in frenzy racing,
Hunted from shuttle and loom."[3]

And presently the heated imagination of the Bacchanals pictures to itself Mt. Cithaeron, the scene of the Dionysiac orgies, with the

[1] *Heracles*, 763–794.

[2] *Helen*, 1358–1365. We have previously said that this digression is here out of place.

[3] *Bacchanals*, 105–119.

noisy festival which ranges over it, and, at the summons of the god's voice, runs riot, like a blind and irresistible torrent, over its steeps and in the depths of its ravines. It is a picture where the mingling of the miraculous and the real produces a thrilling impression:

"O trance of rapture, when, reeling aside
From the Bacchanal rout o'er the mountains flying,
One sinks to the earth, and the fawn's flecked hide
Covers him lying
With its sacred vesture, wherein he hath chased
The goat to the death for its blood — for the taste
Of the feast raw-reeking, when over the hills
Of Phrygia, of Lydia, the wild feet haste,
And the Clamour-king leads, and our hearts he thrills
'Evoë!' crying!

"Flowing with milk is the ground, and with wine is it flowing, and flowing
Nectar of bees; and a smoke as of incense of Araby soars;
And the Bacchanal, lifting the flame of the brand of the pine ruddy-glowing,
Waveth it wide, and with shouts, from the point of the wand as it pours,
Challengeth revellers straying, on-racing, on-dancing, and throwing
Loose to the breeze his curls, while clear through the chorus that roars,
Cleaveth his shout, — 'On, Bacchanal-rout,
On, Bacchanal maidens, ye glory of Tmolus the hill gold-welling,
Blend the acclaim of your chant with the timbrels, thunder-knelling,
Glad-pealing the glad God's praises out
With Phrygian cries and the voice of singing,
When upsoareth the sound of the melody-fountain,
Of the hallowed ringing of flutes far-flinging
The notes that chime with the feet that climb
The pilgrim-path to the mountain!'
And with rapture the Bacchanal onward racing,
With gambollings fleet
As of foals round the mares in the meads that are grazing,
Speedeth her feet."[1]

Another passage of the same play breathes the rage of Bacchic frenzy, when the chorus calls upon the hounds of Lyssa to rouse the women's fury against Pentheus on Mt. Cithaeron, and the burden of their song is a cry for divine vengeance on the head of the

[1] *Bacch.* 136–167. This passage is the *epode* of the *parodos.*

impious king.[1] All the exaltation, all the extravagant mysticism of Bacchic worship is powerfully expressed in these two choruses.

Do not the examples which we have brought together suffice to show that Euripides' choral poetry—which would seem to have been too lightly esteemed—is by no means monotonous, but is varied in character? It is rarely abstruse, and abstruseness, when it does occur, is clever and superficial and is quickly followed by imagery; and sometimes, as we have seen, this poetry is impassioned. Above all, it has color—few pronounced tones, but many delicate shades borrowed from a light palette, which give these exquisite paintings a real charm for the eye.

III

DUETS AND MONODIES

ARISTOPHANES' CRITICISM OF EURIPIDES' LYRICS

We have considered the lyrics sung in the orchestra, and must now examine the songs of the stage, the lyrical passages sung by the actors independently of the chorus.[2] These may be either solos (*monodies*) or duets, or to be more accurate—since two actors never sang together—dialogue-songs.

Stage-lyrics have an importance in the plays of Euripides that was new in the drama. The dramas of Aeschylus afford only a single example of a monody;[3] those of Sophocles only two;[4] but solos abound in Euripides' tragedies, and lyrical dialogues of

[1] Fourth *stasimon*, 977–1023, Wecklein.

[2] These must not be confused with the lyrics which Aristotle (*Poetics*, xii) calls τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς, and which in his opinion are a subdivision of the χορικόν. He means by them the songs in which the actor sang *alternately with the chorus*, and among them he distinguishes the κομμοί properly so-called, which in his eyes are dirges, κομμὸς δὲ θρῆνος κοινὸς χοροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς.

[3] That of Io in the *Prometheus*, 561 *et seq.* The passage spoken by Prometheus (88–127) is not a monody, but a monologue, consisting about equally of iambic trimeters and anapaests. Merely a few verses in a different rhythm are found toward the close.

[4] In the *Electra*, the lamentations of the heroine before the chorus enters, 86–120; in the *Oedipus at Colonus*, the supplication of Antigone, 237–253. It is doubtful whether there was a monody in the *Thamyras*. This hypothesis is based merely upon a correction made by Welcker (*Griech. Trag.* 425) in the text of the anonymous life of Sophocles.

actors are as frequent in his plays as they are rare in those of his predecessors. The poet seems to have had a well-defined intention to substitute song for the spoken word frequently, in order that he might give complete expressiveness to sentiments whose force he thought could not be adequately conveyed by the usual metre of the drama. In moments of exaltation and distress, under the domination of violent or painful emotions, certain of Euripides' characters no longer speak or declaim; like the heroes of modern opera, they sing. And this signifies that the passion of the tragedy, which has previously been restrained within proper limits, now bursts forth and overflows without check. Is not the reason for this to be found in the fact that Euripides frequently gave woman the leading part among his characters? Now, it is natural for a woman to cry aloud in her despair, to abandon herself more than a man would do to the expression of grief, whose actual intensity she even increases, excited by the sound of her own voice and lamentations. For this reason Euripides' heroines sing not a little, and the majority of the monodies[1] and almost all the lyrical passages in dialogue are allotted to actors who played the parts of women.

Dialogues entirely in lyrical form, which presuppose that two or even three persons on the stage have reached the same degree of passion, are necessarily of rare occurrence. We do, however, find a few of these. Andromache in bonds, proceeding to her death with her son, the sight of whom rends her heart; Molossus, clinging to his mother, calling on his absent father for help, and begging his executioner not to kill him; Menelaus, full of furious hatred that prayers only serve to irritate—all these in turn use the dactylo-trochaic metre to convey the various but equally strong emotions which control them.[2] In the *Daughters of Troy* the despair of Hecuba and that of Andromache, one as intense as the other, burst forth in song or pathetic exclamation of the same metrical form.[3] At the close of the *Phoenician Maidens* Antigone and Oedi-

[1] The following are the only exceptions: *Hippolytus*, lamentation of Theseus' son, 1347–1388; *Hecuba*, dirge of Polymestor, 1056–1106; *Ion*, 82–183; *Orestes*, monody of the Phrygian, of which we shall speak later on.

[2] *Andromache*, 501–544.

[3] *Daughters of Troy*, 577–594, with this peculiarity, that the dialogue, at the outset in lyrical form, ends in hexameters, 595–607.

pus, afflicted by a common misfortune, give alternate utterance to their wailing in the same key.[1]

In addition to these dialogue-songs we meet with passages in which the melodic parts are separated simply by spoken verses or parts declaimed. This occurs when two actors appear together who are not in the same agitated state of mind; only one of them is sufficiently impassioned to sing, the other is calmer and is satisfied to speak in iambics or declaim in anapaests. Euripides has made skilful use of this contrast between song and plain speech or declamation, in the same scene, in order to express the various degrees of emotion felt by his characters. Hecuba, before the body of Polydorus, sings a mournful melody in dochmiac metre; her lamentations are interrupted by the simple iambics of the slave and the corypheus,[2] who are not indifferent to her grief, but who cannot be profoundly troubled by it. Helen and Iphigeneia, the one in the presence of her husband, the other face to face with the brother whom she has just recovered, give vent to the joy that elates them in songs[3] which are answered simply in spoken verses, pronounced in a feeling tone no doubt, but in the ordinary form of tragic dialogue. This is due to the fact that Menelaus and Orestes have virile hearts that master their emotions, and that even at this moment their minds are preoccupied with a difficult undertaking, since they must make a perilous escape sure. In this way the various degrees of the same emotion felt by different natures or persons of different sex find a sure and ready means of expression.

The very form of the lyrics in these dialogues is a distinct mark of the new tragedy. In those composed of a song in two parts, Euripides still observes the symmetry of strophic arrangement;[4] but when iambics separate the lyric metres, the poet is no longer bound by this troublesome rule. A strophic division of the dia-

1 *Phoen. Maid.* 1539–1581, dactylic metre, at the end trochaic; 1710–1757, iambo-trochaic metre. Gevaert (*Hist. de la musique*, vol. ii, p. 547) maintains that this passage was composed on the model of the nomes of Timotheus. See also pp. 490–494.

2 *Hecuba*, 684–720.

3 Both are in dochmiac metre; at the end of the passage of the *Helen* (694–697) the feet are almost entirely resolved into short syllables, ἐμὲ δὲ πατρίδος ἄπο, etc. —*Iphig. in Taurica*, 827–899.

4 Except in the *Phoenician Maidens*, 1710 *et seq.* But the text of the close of this play is suspected. See the reasons given by Kinkel, in his edition.

logue occurs only in one of the earliest of his plays, the *Alcestis*, in which the heroine's song, interrupted by Admetus' replies in iambic and anapaestic verse, is composed of two strophes and two antistrophes followed by an epode.[1] In the *Andromache* a change of form has already been adopted:[2] Hermione, who desires to die, at first announces her intention in a regular song; then her increasing excitement breaks down all barriers and bursts forth in disorder. In none of the later plays is the strophic arrangement found in dialogues of this kind. The passion which masters Euripides' heroines refuses longer to obey the stringent laws of art—it has achieved freedom of expression.

The *monody* has just as free a character as the songs that form a part of the dialogue. This lyrical form, which Aristophanes is the first to mention,[3] is not merely what the word implies, an isolated melody to which no other responds either from the orchestra or from the stage, but it also has length, and its continuity is but rarely broken by the words of another actor. The lexicographers attribute to it—and herein they are not wrong—the general character of a lamentation.[4] With rare exceptions it originates, indeed, in mournful situations. This is the form in which the despair and mental derangement of Io are expressed in the *Prometheus*. The lamentation of Electra before the entrance of the chorus and Antigone's supplication addressed to the old men of Colonus are also monodies. But this form of song is so rare in Sophocles that we are justified in asking whether, when it occurs in his plays, it is not a concession to the public taste and due to the influence of the example of his rival Euripides.

Euripides is the king of monody—the very jests of Aristophanes bear witness to the success he had in it. From the *Hippolytus* to the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*, during a period of nearly twenty-five years, there are few tragedies in which Euripides did not allot to some character one of these passages in which the song, with its flute accompaniment, lent a more impressive tone to the poetry. He appears to have displayed in the monody all the resources of

[1] *Alcestis*, 244–279. Farther on (393–415), the song of young Eumelus weeping for his mother, which is interrupted by a remark of Admetus, is likewise in strophic form.

[2] *Androm.* 825–865.

[3] *Frogs*, 849. The word μονῳδεῖν is met with in the *Thesmoph.* 1077, and in the *Peace*, 1012.

[4] Suidas: μονῳδεῖν· τὸ θρηνεῖν.

his art, just as the actors, obliged to possess a twofold talent, showed in it the full extent of their virtuosity. Euripides' monodies, therefore, deserve to engage our attention for a few moments.[1]

They are found in various parts of the drama. It is, however, remarkable that several of them form a part of the prologue[2] and come immediately before the *parodos*. The audiences at Euripides' plays must have had a lively taste for dramatic music, since the poet shows no apprehension in asking them to listen to a long solo, followed without interruption by a song rendered by the concerted voices of the chorus. It is true that the whole in the aggregate is not longer than the *parodos* in Aeschylus. Merely a sort of division has taken place between the chorus and the monody, the latter growing richer to the extent that the other has been curtailed. Moreover, with the monody has come a change in character. In Greek tragedy the song of the chorus is only exceptionally impassioned, whereas the monody always, or nearly always, shows feeling. Only the youthful Ion, at the beginning of a drama which at any rate is a sort of tragi-comedy, expresses calm and gentle sentiments in a monody. Everywhere else the solos are songs of grief. This grief merely varies in degree and intensity. Hecuba's two monodies,[3] the two solos of Electra,[4] Evadne's in the *Suppliants*,[5] Antigone's in the *Phoenician Maidens*,[6] Iphigeneia's in the *Iphigeneia at Aulis*,[7] are all regular dirges, whether the heroines weep before the bodies of the dead, or, being condemned to die, lament for themselves, or merely deplore the ruin of their country or their lost happiness. At other times the monody gives expression to the most disordered emotions. Such is the song of Cassandra in her delirium, when, in short hurried sentences in which the connection of the words is often broken,[8] in a rapid,

1 On this subject, see Fritzsche, *De monodiis Euripideis*, Dissert. 1842; Hartung, *Euripides restitutus, de canticis Euripideis*, vol. i, p. 439 *et seq.*; H. Schmidt, *Die Monodien und Wechselgesänge der attischen Tragödie, Leipzig*, 1871.

2 *Hecuba*, 59–97; *Electra*, 112–166; *Daughters of Troy*, 98–152; *Ion*, 82–183.

3 In the *Hecuba*, 59 *et seq.*, and in the *Daughters of Troy*, 98 *et seq.*

4 *Electra*, 112–166; *Orestes*, 960–1012.

5 *Suppl.* 990–1008, 1012–1030. This monody is divided into two parts by a remark of the corypheus. But Evadne does not appear to have heard the words addressed to her. 6 *Phoen. Maid.* 1485–1538. 7 *Iphig. at Aul.* 1279–1335.

8 The first verse gives an idea of this: ἄνεχε, πάρεχε, φῶς φέρε· σέβω, φλέγω . . .

abrupt rhythm, she celebrates in dance, possessed by a joy which oppresses our hearts, her marriage with Agamemnon:

"Up with the torch!—give it me—let me render
Worship to Phoebus!—lo, lo how I fling
Wide through his temple the flash of its splendour:—
Hymen! O Marriage-god, Hymen my king!
Happy the bridegroom who waiteth to meet me;
Happy am I for the couch that shall greet me;
Royal espousals to Argos I bring:—
Bridal-king, Hymen, thy glory I sing.

"Mother, thou lingerest long at thy weeping,
Aye makest moan for my sire who hath died,
Mourn'st our dear country with sorrow unsleeping:
Therefore myself for mine own marriage-tide
Kindle the firebrands, a glory outstreaming,
Toss up the torches, a radiance far-gleaming:—
Hymen, to thee is their brightness upleaping;
Hecatê, flash thou thy star-glitter wide,
After thy wont when a maid is a bride.

"Float, flying feet of the dancers, forth-leading
Revel of bridals: ring, bacchanal strain,
Ring in thanksgiving for fortune exceeding
Happy, that fell to my father to gain.
Holy the dance is, my duty, my glory:
Lead thou it, Phoebus; midst bay-trees before thee
Aye have I ministered, there in thy fane:—
Marriage-king, Hymen!—sing loud the refrain.

"Up, mother, join thou the revel:—with paces
Woven with mine through the sweet measure flee;
Hitherward, thitherward, thrid the dance-mazes:
Sing ever 'Marriage-king!—Hymen!' sing ye.
Bliss ever chime through the notes of your singing,
Hail ye the bride with glad voices outringing.
Daughters of Phrygia, arrayed like the Graces,
Hymn ye my bridal, the bridegroom for me
Destined by fate's everlasting decree."[1]

Is it necessary to point out how intensely dramatic is this hymeneal song, whose details recall many of the actual nuptial ceremo-

[1] *Daughters of Troy*, 308–340.

nies, in view of the cruel position in which Cassandra and her mother who listens to her are placed?—There are even more violent situations in which mental suffering, at its climax and under the goad of physical torture, would find expression only in cries but for the monody, whose free and flexible forms admirably adapt it to express the full fury of passion and all the outpourings of despair. The traitor Polymestor has just been punished behind the scenes, his children have been murdered, the captive Trojan women have put out his eyes at Hecuba's command, and he comes upon the stage, alone, with bloody eyeballs like Oedipus, and rushes in in blind and ineffectual pursuit of his torturers. His song, interrupted by a single remark of the corypheus, abounds in exclamations, questions that he asks of himself, imprecations, ugent appeals,—it is a breathless outburst in which the anapaestic movement serves to quicken the agitation expressed by the dochmiac rhythm.[1] We can only conjecture what the melody must have added to the words. Perhaps admirers of ancient tragedy were of the opinion that striving for effect was here carried to the point of abuse. But this passage, unique of its kind, nevertheless shows us, in comparison with others, what the poet aimed at and what changes he had effected in dramatic art. In Euripides, songs are no longer rendered merely at regular intervals in the orchestra, nor do they merely alternate between the orchestra and actors; at all critical moments in the drama they may pass from the stage over the heads of the members of the chorus and go straight to the ears and souls of the spectators. Dramatic emotion is no longer, as formerly, entirely confined to the dialogue. It spreads and develops, with the potency peculiar to the new means of expression that it employs, in these monodies, which are often plaintive, sometimes terribly moving, and recall, several of them, the most touching and impassioned airs of modern opera.

Among these monodies, there are some whose form appears to be peculiar to the art of Euripides: these are the solos of which Aristophanes makes fun, terming them *Cretan monodies*.[2] We must beware of giving heed to the ancient commentators who find

1 *Hecuba*, 1056–1084, 1088–1106.

2 ὦ Κρητικὰς μὲν συλλέγων μονῳδίας, says Aeschylus in addressing Euripides, *Frogs*, 849.

in this phrase simply an allusion to the *Cretans*, of which Aristophanes parodies at least a strophe in his *Frogs*.[1] The term has a broader meaning. In antiquity the inhabitants of Crete had the reputation of being agile dancers, and were supposed to have invented the *hyporcheme*, in which dancing was inseparable from the melody, the performers signifying at the same time, by their poses and gestures, all the emotions that their voices expressed.[2] Euripides' Cretan monodies were therefore airs in which the artist accompanied his song with dance steps and a kind of mimicry. Was that something entirely new? One of Euripides' predecessors, Phrynichus, boasted that he had invented "as many figures as there are waves on the sea in a stormy night."[3] Aeschylus himself had in his employ a chorus-leader, Telestes, who was at the same time such a master of the ballet and such a pantomime that at the performance of the *Seven against Thebes* he was able, so the story goes, to picture all the events and emotions of the drama[4] by the motions of his body and hands. Euripides, in his Cretan monodies, therefore merely takes up once more one of the traditions of the oldest art; only, he makes the stage richer at the expense of the orchestra. In his dramas, the skilful man, the wonderful artist gifted with all the talents, who knows how to declaim, sing, dance and mimic, is no longer the corypheus—he is an actor.

The actor who took the part of Iocasta in the *Phoenician Maidens* had to be capable of performing this multiple function. In her happiness at again seeing Polyneices after a long absence, Iocasta overflows with tenderness—in her abandon she sings and accompanies her song with steps and expressive gestures:

"What shall I say to thee?—how shall I grasp it, the rapture of old?
By assurance of word,
Or by hands that embrace,
Or by feet that are stirred,

[1] *Frogs*, 1356: ἀλλ' ὦ Κρῆτες, Ἴδης τέκνα . . . Fritzsche believes that the verses which follow are those of Euripides. Nauck (fragm. 471) is of an opposite opinion. It is certain that the comic poet parodies the monody of Icarus in the *Cretans* (schol. 849).

[2] Cf. Fritzsche, *Comment. ad Aristoph. Ran.* p. 291.

[3] Plut. *Mor.* 732 f.

[4] Athen. i, p. 21 f, 22 a. Cf. Sommerbrodt, *Scaenica*, p. 219.

Or by body that sways,
Hitherward, thitherward, tossed as the dance intertwineth its maze?"[1]

Dancing is not indicated, as it is here,[2] in all the monodies of Euripides; but it is hard not to presuppose it in the famous monody of the Phrygian in the *Orestes*, in which all the critics agree in recognizing[3] that pantomime was coupled with song,—and pantomime would be incomplete without the steps and poses of the dance.—We recall the story of the poor slave who was with his mistress Helen when she was slain by Orestes and now comes upon the stage in utter affright. Barbarian though he is, he is acquainted with the practices of the new tragedy, and instead of speaking, he sings, and sings at such length that the audience might perhaps grow tired of hearing him, if the poet had not resorted to a novel device and divided the passage he allots to him into six parts separated by iambic trimeters. It is the corypheus who puts questions to the Phrygian, encourages him to explain himself, and in this wise gives him an opportunity to continue his story without the risk of its becoming monotonous. I imagine it did not weary the Greeks—it is so varied, and above all its form is so novel. The Phrygian in the *Orestes* plays the rôle of the usual messenger of tragedy; though thus accredited, and notwithstanding the grave news he brings, his ingenuousness at first provokes a smile when he manifests at the same time his joy at escape from danger and the fright by which he is possessed. We are somewhat surprised at hearing him subsequently sing a lament over the fall of Troy;[4] but though the reason for this song is not at once apparent,[5] we can divine the poet's intention. This dirge does not resemble any of those which Euripides had previously composed on the same subject; its words are not very ori-

[1] *Phoenician Maidens*, 312–317.

[2] Cf. the monody of Cassandra quoted above, *Daughters of Troy*, 332, 333, χόρευε . . . πόδα σὸν ἔλισσε τῷδ' ἐκεῖσε μετ' ἐμέθεν ποδῶν.

[3] G. Hermann (preface to his edition of the *Orestes*, xii) thinks that Euripides wished to imitate what Aeschylus had done in the *Ransom of Hector*. But, according to a passage in Athenaeus (i, 21 f), it appears that the dances in question were executed by the Phrygians who composed the chorus of the drama, and not by a single person.

[4] *Orestes*, 1381–1391.

[5] The connection of ideas is: Troy has fallen on account of *Helen*.

ginal, but its music is new. The words are sung in a mode[1] the nature of which is little understood, but we know that it was an oriental air, and originated probably in the very country from which the slave came. Lovers of musical novelties must therefore have experienced decided pleasure in hearing this lyric. The Phrygian, thereupon, reaches his subject; after an exordium which is likewise an Asiatic lamentation, he relates how Orestes and Pylades forced their way to his mistress, what ruse Orestes employed to draw Helen near the household altar while his friend was locking up the slaves, how the murder was done, the epic combat of the Greeks against the barbarian servants, the miraculous disappearance of the victim.[2]

Everything in this scene of a kind hitherto unknown interested the audience: the costume of the Phrygian, his gestures, his dancing, the notes of his song, his reiterated cries of "Ailinos! Ailinos!" and his invocations of the Great Mother of Mt. Ida. No lyrical passage in Greek tragedy has—to use a modern phrase—more local color than this. Nor is there any whose form is apparently more irregular. The rhythm, which changes with each part composing the song, is in turn dochmiac, iambo-trochaic, logaoedic, anapaestic and paeonic. Is this a fancy to which the poet yields and means to excuse by the pretext that a barbarian is singing? No. The variety of the metres, like that of the music, has its cause in the disturbed state of the Phrygian's mind. Above all it corresponds to the variety and progression of the emotions through which he passes while relating the successive stages of the drama of which he has been the terrified witness. This man must not speak of the fan of feathers, with which he cooled the cheeks of Helen when at her spinning, in the same tone in which he is to describe the scene of the murder and the final battle. This passage, then, so boldly conceived, gives evidence of much art.

Euripides did not disregard rules thus openly in all his monodies. There are some whose structure recalls that of certain of Aeschylus' choral songs. Electra, at the opening of the drama named after her, breathes forth her grief in strophes which are

[1] The *νόμος ἁρμάτειος*.

[2] *Orestes*, 1395–1502.

separated each from its antistrophe by a *mesode*.[1] Thus at the beginning of the play, before any event or change of fortune has occurred that might disturb her, Electra indulges in the expression of sentiments which are familiar to her, with which she has lived for years: hatred of Clytemnestra, regret for her murdered but not forgotten father, anxious waiting for the coming of Orestes. The regularity of an accurately divided song comports well with her habitual emotions. On the other hand, we are rather surprised to see that Cassandra remembers the laws of the antistrophe,[2] as if the fixed idea which dominates her madness could not overstep them with a freedom less mindful of order. Is it because Cassandra is a prophetess, inspired by Apollo, that, even during her mental derangement, she instinctively observes the laws of the art over which the god, her master, presides? Is it not rather because hymeneal songs took that form, and because the poet wishes to give to Cassandra's monody a character more strikingly real by remaining true to the tradition of the poetry and music of the marriage festival?

Such exact symmetry, it must be admitted, is exceptional. Aristotle — or the author of the *Problems*, which are attributed to him — makes the assertion that the "songs on the stage are not antistrophic, while those of the chorus are antistrophic," and adds, in explanation of this, that "the actor acts and imitates, while the chorus imitates less."[3] By this we are to understand that the actor on the stage represents a very live person, who — in striking contrast with the chorus, whose bearing is naturally calmer — conforms the expression of his emotions and passions with difficulty to the rigorous laws which govern the songs of the chorus. And it has been remarked that Aristophanes, who in two passages parodies Euripides' monodies, does not here make use of the antistrophic form. In vain have certain critics, especially Gottfried Hermann and Seidler,[4] tried to oppose the authority of the passage

[1] *Electra*, 112–166. Electra sings while walking, as is indicated by the refrain of the first antistrophe (ὦ ἔμβα ἔμβα κατακλαίουσ', ἰὼ μοί μοι), addressing herself and rousing our own feeling by the dirge, ἴθι τὸν αὐτὸν ἔγειρε γόον (125).

[2] In the monody of the *Daughters of Troy*, already quoted.

[3] *Probl.* xix, xvi; cf. xix, xxx.

[4] *De vers. dochm.* pp. 252, 275. For the discussion, see Fritzsche, *De Monodiis Euripideis*, pp. 4–7.

cited above, and undertaken by main force to reduce some of our poet's monodies to the usual regularity of lyric song. In a general way, Aristotle's remark remains true, although it admits of exceptions which show the unbounded freedom the poet allowed himself. We have just seen that two of the extant monodies are constructed according to the tradition of Aeschylus' art. In another, the strophes are not arranged in pairs, but balance one another at a great distance.[1] There are others also which are not antistrophic throughout, but only in part. Sometimes, as in Creusa's monody in the *Ion*, this regular part forms the nucleus, as it were, of the song; it occupies the centre between free schemes which precede and follow it; sometimes, on the other hand, it is placed at the very beginning of the passage. Electra's monody in the *Orestes* opens with a strophe and corresponding antistrophe;[2] then, as if her passion could not brook this barrier, it throws off the yoke of symmetry and expands in five independent strophes.[3] This freedom is certainly not absolute license. These independent strophes of unequal length and varying form[4] do not proceed at random and do not depend on merely a capricious fancy. They too have their laws, which H. Schmidt first ventured to formulate and Gevaert has summarized after him,[5] but these are not strict—the poet at times seems to toy with them and they never hold him in leash.

He assumed these liberties only because he desired to give more intensity and variety to the expression of dramatic passion. When, therefore, passion has reached its climax, and is no longer master of itself but loses all balance, the antistrophe is cast aside and the symmetry of corresponding members entirely abandoned. The commonest form of Euripides' monodies, therefore, is the non-antistrophic song, which, with its irregular periods, is well adapted to all the changes and outbursts of emotion. Violent agitation, quick outbreaks of feeling, their abrupt subsidence, sudden tran-

[1] *Phoenician Maidens*, str. *ά* 1485–1497; antistr. *ά* 1570–1581.

[2] *Orestes*, 960–970=971–981. [3] *Orestes*, 982–1012.

[4] G. Hermann has given them the name of παρομοιόστροφα (*Doctr. metr.* p. 750). He correctly remarks (p. 783) that these irregular strophes, used only in the new tragedy, occur only at times of great excitement in the action.

[5] *Histoire et théorie de la musique*, vol. ii, pp. 227–229.

sitions from exaltation to depression, are all marked, in each melodic portion of the monody, by changes of rhythm. And when agitation is extreme, these changes occur even within the limits of a single musical phrase, so that sometimes anapaests are found combined with paeons, or are united with dochmiacs and chorees and form metrical combinations not known in regular choral song.[1] Is it not natural that the dramatic melody should follow, with supple inflections, the irregular course and windings of the emotions it expresses? And who would dream of reproaching Euripides for his attempt to adapt the song on the stage to the capricious and ungovernable force that inspires it? There are, however, among these varied rhythms of the monody two which, on account of their character, occur more often than the others: first, the dochmiac rhythm, which, formed by the juxtaposition of two unequal feet,[2] has a clashing and jerky effect, and thus excels in interpreting unrest, over-excitement and fluctuation between opposing feelings; secondly, the anapaestic spondee, a plaintive rhythm of Asiatic origin, wonderfully adapted to the songs of Euripides' heroines, who frequently break forth in lamentations.

Some day perhaps we shall fathom the music of the monodies even in detail. If a papyrus in the collection of the Archduke Reynier has informed us about the musical notation of a lyrical passage in the *Orestes*, why may not the future have other discoveries of the same kind in store for us?[3] Euripides' monodies appear to have enjoyed so great and lasting a popularity that it would not be surprising if the tradition of the music that accompanied them had been preserved for a long time in antiquity and some traces of it were still left. Meanwhile we must be satisfied with what the author of the *Problems* tells us: "The hypo-Dorian and hypo-Phrygian modes, which are not suitable for the chorus, are adapted for songs on the stage." Both these modes, although they did not resemble one another,—the former being grave and majestic, the

[1] Aristophanes alludes to this in the *Frogs*, 1327, 1328, ἀνὰ τὸ δωδεκαμήχανον Κυρήνης μελοποιῶν. See the analysis which Gevaert makes, from this point of view, of the monody of the Phrygian, *Histoire de la musique*, vol. ii, p. 77 (cf. 226), and of that of *Iphig. at Aulis*, pp. 234, 549.

[2] The bacchius and the iambius.

[3] See Ch. Wessely, *Le papyrus musical d'Euripide*, in the *Revue des études grecques*, vol. v (1892), p. 265.

latter enthusiastic and irregular,—had an energetic character which adapted them to rendering the sentiments of active personages, such as the heroes of tragedy, but made them ill suited for the song of those who, like the chorus, were passive.[1] Let us add from the same source that Euripides' monodies were usually accompanied by the flute. "Why," asks the author of the *Problems*, "is it more agreeable to hear a monody accompanied by a flute than by a lyre?" And he replies: "This is because the flute, which is a wind instrument, goes better with the song on account of its similarity to it, whereas the sounds of the lyre do not mingle so well with the human voice."[2] The critic might have given still another reason, namely, that the flute is impassioned and the lute is not. But the monody, as we have said, is the domain of passion.

What effects were the flute and song able to add to the poetry of the monody? It is impossible for us to judge, and the use of unsymmetrical periods, the variety of metres and the sudden changes of rhythm to which we have called attention, hardly warrant us in suggesting even a distant analogy between Euripides' monodies and the arias of modern opera. But while we can only guess at the merits which gained them so much applause, we are better informed about their defects. No doubt the parody which Aristophanes places on Aeschylus' lips resembles the real monodies of Euripides only so far as a caricature resembles a portrait; but since we can hardly doubt that this caricature is cleverly drawn, shall we not find in it certain features of the original, but exaggerated, of course, as was necessary to make the audience laugh? It is from this point of view that it becomes interesting to study the parody found in the *Frogs* and to compare it with the longest of Euripides' extant monodies,—that of the Phrygian slave which has been considered above.

When we read the monody manufactured by Aristophanes[3] the first thing that strikes us is its incoherence. It lacks unity of subject, for it deals at first with a woman frightened in her sleep by

[1] Arist. *Probl.* ix, 48, *κατὰ δὲ τὴν ὑποδωριστὶ καὶ ὑποφρυγιστὶ πράττομεν, ὃ οὐκ οἰκεῖόν ἐστι χορῷ.*

[2] *Probl.* xix, 43. When the monody preceded the entrance of the chorus, as in the *Hecuba*, the flute-player was no doubt placed behind the scenes.

[3] *Frogs*, 1331–1364, Kock.

a dream whose evil effects she tries to conjure away, and then—the same person still sings—with a spinner who has her rooster stolen by a neighbor while she is at work. This cruel misfortune so bothers the poor woman's brain that her ideas follow one another without connection, in complete disorder. Such, at certain points, is the manner of the monody of the Phrygian, who also is very much upset and sings a lamentation over the downfall of Troy which it is hard to connect with the rest of his story. Just as the slave in the *Orestes* repeatedly cries out, "O Earth! O Earth!—O Mother! O Mother of Ida!" so Aristophanes' spinner makes undue use of exclamations and invocations. In her attempt to find the winged creature she has lost, she calls to her aid at the same time the Nymphs and the Cretans, the goddess Artemis and the goddess Hecate; previously she has invoked Night and the god of the sea. "Griefs, groans," often recur in her speech, as in that of the Phrygian. Like him, she emphasizes words by repeating them.[1] She heaps up, at short intervals, epithets that have the same meaning.[2] She trills roulades[3] like the actors in Euripides' dramas. Finally, nearly all the lyrical metres of tragedy appear jumbled together in her song, making a sort of rhythmical potpourri similar to that in the monody of the *Orestes*.[4] We can hardly deny that the comic poet cleverly caught certain characteristics of these monodies, whose success caused him so much chagrin, and that he ridiculed them in a rather amusing way.

Aristophanes' criticism extends more generally to all the lyrics in Euripides' tragedies, monodies as well as others, as we see from the parody which precedes that we have just considered.

AESCHYLUS

"Halcyons, who by the ever-rippling
Waves of the sea are babbling,
Dewing your plumes with the drops that fall
From wings in the salt spray dabbling.

1 See especially *Frogs*, 1352 *et seq.*, ὁ δ' ἀνέπτατ' ἀνέπτατ' ἐς αἰθέρα · ἐμοι δ' ἄχε' ἄχεα κατέλιπε, δάκρυα δάκρυά τ' ἀπ' ὀμμάτων ἔβαλον ἔβαλον ἀ τλάμων.

2 *Frogs*, 1331, κελαινοφαής; 1335, μελαίνας Νυκτός; 1337, μελανονεκυείμονα, etc.

3 *Frogs*, 1349, ει-ει-ει-ειλίσσουσα.

4 For the rhythms of the passage in the *Frogs*, see the table of metres at the end of Kock's edition.

"Spiders, ever with twir-r-r-r-rling fingers
Weaving the warp and the woof,
Little, brittle, network, fretwork,
Under the coigns of the roof.

"The minstrel shuttle's care.
Where in the front of the dark-prowed ships,
Yarely the flute-loving dolphin skips.

"Races here and oracles there.

"And the joy of the young vines smiling,
And the tendril of grapes, care-beguiling.

"O embrace me, my child, O embrace me.
[*To* DIONYSUS] You see this foot?"[1]

Here Aristophanes invents nothing, or rather his invention consists in detaching several lyric bits[2] from various plays of Euripides and stringing them together at random. According to him, there is neither orderly development nor connection of ideas in the choruses of the tragic poet, but merely a mass of incoherent and disconnected figures, in which the mind would search in vain for sense, and only the ear might perceive a vague jingling of sounds. Moreover these sounds provoke laughter by the accumulation of several notes of the melody on the same syllable and Euripides' impudence in laying hands on the traditional metric. Has he not dared to disdain the laws established by the masters and introduce an anapaest as base of a glyconic line?[3] What an abominable crime! And should not Aristophanes defend the ancient metres against his attacks, just as he defends the ancient customs?

Just before this he has made fun of the variety in the music of Euripides, who gathers his material from all sources, and borrows now from Greek popular airs,—songs of the banquet and

[1] *Frogs*, 1309–1323, in B. B. Rogers' version.

[2] *Frogs*, 1317, 1318 are taken word for word from a chorus of the *Electra*, 435, 436. From this we conclude that the remainder likewise consists of lyric snatches from Euripides. The very graceful verses at the beginning, ἀλκυόνες . . . δροσιζόμεναι, recall only remotely *Iphig. in Taurica*, 1089–1091, ὄρνις . . . ἀλκύων ἀείδεις. According to the scholiast, they come from the *Iphig. at Aulis*, where they are now no longer found. Verses 1313–1316 are said to be taken from the *Meleager*, and 1320–1322 from the *Hypsipyle*.

[3] See Kock's note on 1322.

dance music,—and now, for his dirges, from Asiatic melodies.[1] But was this association of foreign with Hellenic music an innovation in tragedy? Tragedy, for a long time grave and serious, the enemy of all excess, had been obliged to ask Lydia and Phrygia for what it itself lacked, when the dithyramb and the drama were gradually developed: the piercing tones of joy and grief, the transports and tremors of enthusiasm. But as if it had to apologize for this admixture of barbarian elements, which had sullied its native purity, it did not forget the origin of the new notes by which it had been enriched; on the contrary, it made a point of mentioning it at every opportunity. The chorus of the *Persians* takes care to give notice that we are to hear the plaintive songs of the "Mariandynian mourners."[2] In the *Omphale*, a satyr-drama by Ion of Chius, a contemporary of Euripides, the Lydian women of whom the chorus consisted sang their "old national airs."[3] The slave in the *Orestes*, as we have seen, wishes it known that he is singing in the νόμος ἁρμάτειος which had entered Greece from the valleys of Bithynian Olympus. Should we be surprised to find that Euripides, following the example of Aeschylus, borrows—the offence for which Aristophanes reproaches him—from barbarian music, and in particular reproduces Carian airs for the flute, if the mournful character of those melodies was most suitable[4] for the expression of lamentation and despair? Why should we be surprised that the music of the *Bacchanals*, with its accompaniment, is not purely Greek? "Take up your timbrels," says Dionysus to the chorus, "and with them compass the royal halls of Pentheus."[5] The poet wishes to call attention to the instrument; for one of the strophes of the *parodos* is entirely devoted to its history, to the invention of the *tympanon* by the Corybants, which the Satyrs subsequently borrowed from the Mother of the Gods and brought to the Bacchic feasts of Mt. Cithaeron. This instrument, with its vehement and "thunder-knelling"[6] notes, accompanied the enthusiastic

[1] *Frogs*, 1301–1303: οὗτος δ' ἀπὸ πάντων μὲν φέρει, παροινίων, σκολίων Μελήτου, Καρικῶν αὐλημάτων, θρήνων, χορείων.

[2] *Persians*, 936. Farther on (1054), Xerxes bids the chorus sing a "Mysian hymn."

[3] Athen. xiv, 634 f. Fragm. 22 and 23, Nauck.

[4] For example, in the chorus of the *Iphigeneia in Taurica*, 179 *et seq.*

[5] *Bacch.* 58–61.

[6] *Bacch.* 156.

song of the women of the chorus, especially in the animated epode. This innovation was the consequence of the progress made by the cult of the Lydian Bacchus in Attica at the same time with that of the Phrygian Great Mother, who, since the time of Pericles, had possessed the freedom of the city of Athens. When Cybele came and established herself in the Metroum, she brought with her the passionate music which was inseparable from the ceremonies of her worship. The Athenians, who had given the goddess so hearty a welcome, cannot have been displeased to hear this music in their theatre.

We lack much information that might enable us to reply intelligently to the other criticisms of Aristophanes, and defend the monodies as well as the choruses of Euripides against his attacks. We should note, however, that these monodies and choruses are not merely poems, but also songs. Would it not be entirely unfair in our day to examine the libretto of an opera in which the words are merely the pegs on which the melody is hung, with the same rigor we apply to the text of a tragedy? Was not Boileau, in his day, wrong in demanding as much of Quinault as of Racine? If, in the lyrics of Euripides' tragedies, we are unwilling to consider anything except the poetry—all that remains to us—we shall certainly not always be satisfied. But Aeschylus himself could not sustain that kind of criticism. Is there any great merit in the long dirge, considered as poetry, with which the *Persians* ends? Is it not primarily a piece of music which owed its effectiveness entirely to the singing? Similarly in Euripides, we must not ignore the music, even if it is lost to us. Then, all that Aristophanes scoffs at and modern criticism after him animadverts upon—repetitions of words, accumulations of epithets, empty sonorousness, which are all faults from the point of view of poetic art—become probable indications of musical intentions. Why insist on phrases, precise and logically connected, on words full of strength and meaning, where the poet has sometimes merely wished to add *fioriture?* Gevaert, in his *Histoire de la musique*, has justly defended Euripides on this point. He calls attention to the fact that love of repetition is a characteristic feature of all poetry written to accompany music, and adds: "Melody is not straightforward narrative, but a delightful phrase

that we wish to hear repeatedly, with a meaning ever deeper, ever more intimate. . . . By means of well-managed repetitions, an impression against which the listener at first rebels gradually finds favor and finally grows to such proportions as to pervade the whole soul." The frequent use of interjections seems to him to be justified on analogous grounds. He says: "In its irresistible impetuosity passion finds a better expression in barely articulated sounds than in words."[1] We are inclined to believe with Gevaert, although we lack most of the evidence in the case, that Euripides as a musical poet was unjustly treated by Aristophanes. If his choruses and his monodies have defects—and they cannot be denied, although there is no occasion to exaggerate them—we must lay them to the requirements of the music rather than to the poet's lack of talent.

Toward the time of the Peloponnesian War, music becomes ambitious and is no longer content with the subordinate and almost unnoticed part it has in the drama; it demands a place of honor by the side of poetry, from which it means to emancipate itself. Euripides gives it that place in his monodies. The musical art of the old days has been transformed, and has acquired a wealth, variety, and power of expression hitherto unknown. Not a few people at Athens are astonished at these changes, worry over them, are shocked by them, and make open opposition to them. Euripides encourages them in their course. The story goes that one day, when the dithyrambic poet Timotheus was hissed for some innovations which appeared to violate all the laws of music, Euripides, who was present, told him to be of good cheer; for "it would not be long ere he had made a complete conquest of the public."[2] This Timotheus, who added a twelfth string to the cithara,—a realistic musician, busy with imitative effects, who simulated the noise of a tempest or the cries of a woman in child-labor,[3] a bold genius, who brought about a veritable revolution in his art, for he boasted that he had driven off the Muse of earlier days, just as Zeus had dethroned Cronus,[4]—was no doubt much younger than Euripides, who knew him only in the last ten

[1] *Hist. de la musique*, vol. ii, p. 232 *et seq.*

[2] Plut. *Mor.* p. 795 d.

[3] Athen. viii, p. 338 a, 352 a.

[4] Timotheus, fragm. 12, Bergk. Cf. Pherecrates, in Plut. *About Music*, 30.

or twelve years of his own career.[1] But what difference does that make? The anecdote related by Plutarch is not less significant. Euripides was late in coming under the influence of Timotheus, but doubtless did not escape that of the former's teacher, Phrynis of Mitylene, nor the example of Philoxenus of Cythera. The rhythmical structure of his monodies shows that he resolutely took up the cause of the innovators. This music which he loved, to which he devoted himself, because it was more supple, more expressive, more impassioned than the ancient music, must therefore have accounted to the Greeks for a part of the merits, as well as defects, of his lyric songs.

[1] According to the *Parian Marble* (88, Flach), Timotheus died in 357 B. C., at the age of ninety.

CONCLUSION

CRITICISM, which compares poets in order to gauge their importance and rank them, long ago awarded the third prize in Greek tragedy to Euripides. Thus had the judges of the dramatic competitions often decided at Athens. This judgment is not to be reversed. If Euripides should be compared with his rivals, he would easily be overwhelmed by the majesty of Aeschylus and the perfection of Sophocles. To us it has seemed more interesting to consider him chiefly by himself, and to attempt to enter into the peculiar spirit of his dramatic work, after first outlining his critical attitudes.

Our poet was a philosopher whom philosophy had so enthralled that he could never escape from it. While he was still young, his eyes were attracted by the first glimmerings of science that rose on the horizon of Asia. He proceeds in the direction of this new light which enchants him, suffers himself to be dazzled by the brilliant fancies of the Ionians, dreams with them of an explanation of all things,—of a conception of life. These splendid speculations draw him away from the common beliefs, upon which he looks with pity. Naïvely absurd or immoral legends of current mythology, popular gods who often resemble the worst of men, and like them, are malevolent and depraved—to all these phantoms his powerful imagination grants a momentary life, but—as he discreetly gives us to understand—his reason is never duped into belief in their actual existence. Even the name of Zeus has no longer for him the same meaning that it has for the people at large, and in the world, stripped of its demons, he sees naught but the continuous play of an irresistible Force.

But was he enslaved to a system? His unfettered independence leads him into contradictions, which are not due merely to his practice of the dramatic art, but also reflect the uncertainties of his mind and his restless curiosity. Euripides did not possess the fine serenity of spirit of his contemporary, Sophocles. The enigma of the physical world which he attempted to solve at once delighted and troubled him; the sight of the moral world saddened him. When he looked about him, his discernment, piercing

through deceptive appearances, looked to the very bottom of things human, where its vision was too clear for the peace of his soul and for the repose of others. Life did not appear to him good. Dissatisfied with his time, aggravated by the evil about him, he sometimes poured out his bitterness in satire which he purposely instilled into his tragedies. He criticises with harshness; he would like also, if he could, to effect reforms. At the very moment he is calling back to life the men of the past, he is thinking of those of the present, to whom he speaks in the hope that they will listen to him and carry away from the performance of his plays, if not moral improvement, at least, doubts, scruples, awakened reflection. Aristophanes was not wrong in his dislike. Euripides was not one of those who submit to public opinion or flatter it, but oppose and guide it. He guided it much too far, to the thinking of Athenian conservatives. While his sceptical insinuations undermined religious faith, his resolute convictions, which took fright at no enemy, laid hold of every pretext to make war upon social prejudices. He attacked the prestige of the nobility; in one of his dramas he gave a place of honor to a man of the people; he tried to raise even the slave from his degradation; and he anticipated the Stoics in proclaiming the natural equality of all men. The mere announcement of such truths in the theatre did not secure their immediate recognition; prejudices have a tenacious life which triumphs over centuries. But the ideas of the poet, taken up by the philosophers, gathered together by the compilers of anthologies, and thus perpetuated throughout antiquity from Greece to Rome and from Rome to Byzantium, were not to be lost; they took root in people's minds, and among the poets Euripides was one of the workers who labored most efficiently for the emancipation of the Greek mind.

His philosophy was prejudicial to his genius as an artist. Into tragedy, where all should be action and passion, he introduced deliberate reasoning and calm criticism. Some of his characters occasionally forget who they are, in order to exhibit themselves in the light in which the poet desires them to appear,—as friends of Socrates who have associated with Prodicus and held discussions with Protagoras. A grain of sophistry mingled with the drama was certainly not likely to displease a people in whom the power

of delicate discernment was innate and soon degenerated into a spirit of subtlety. Euripides, however, owed his success, not especially to that, but to his new conception of tragedy. The saying of Sophocles, though it has become trite, remains profoundly true: Euripides painted men "as they are." The poets of other days had peopled the earth, in its early ages, with men of an heroic type, closely akin to the gods, of gigantic stature, and with souls as big as their bodies, who towered above and eclipsed the new commonplace humanity, that was able to recognize itself in them only by a process of transfiguration. Aeschylus and Sophocles had had their eyes fixed on that ideal; Euripides turned away from it. The present that attracts and holds him, the reality that surrounds him, do not permit him to stand far enough away from the things he sees and observes. He inserts comic scenes in tragedy. He does not, like his friend Agathon, go so far as to write dramas which owe nothing to the legends of the past; but the kings and princes whom in obedience to tradition he lets live and act in his plays walk with a different step and speak in another tone. To judge by their language, we should think that, unmindful of their dignity, they had been adopted into a family of the middle class at Athens, whose customary feelings and common affections they share, with certain delicate moral distinctions. About these bourgeois heroes are gathered a lot of common people who succeed in making tragedy "democratic."[1]

Melancholy contemplation of the present lent a realistic character to Euripides' art. Evil, which has succeeded in creating a considerable place for itself in the world, no doubt seemed to him to deserve at least a small place on the stage, the world in miniature; for, side by side with the beautiful, he now and then exhibited the ugly, putting immoral women on the stage, rousing interest in young women who had been betrayed, not even shrinking from the recital of monstrous vices and the representation of unusual passions. Furthermore, he exposed all the wretchedness of humanity to view, of the body as well as of the soul: he laid bare bleeding wounds, let his characters cry out under the goad of pain, and made a spectacle of insanity. His striving for pathos, wherein

[1] We recall that Aristophanes (*Frogs*, 952) makes Euripides say: δημοκρατικὸν γὰρ αὖτ' ἔδρων.

he excelled, was his motive and excuse. But we must beware of exaggeration. The extant dramas of Euripides, as well as those of which we know only the subjects, give an impression of such wealth of combinations and of so great variety of dramatic situations that the characteristics which we have just pointed out do not predominate when the total amount of his work is taken into account. The poet knew other means of moving his audiences besides the rags of his kings, the wounds and corpses of his heroes, the excess or rage of his madmen. He did not forget that in the human soul there are simple feelings whose power is unequalled, instincts which, when over-excited or opposed, become the source of tragic emotions. He therefore interested his audience in children who weep for their mothers, or with them are threatened with death; and in mothers, like Eurydice, who have just lost their children; like Merope, are about to kill them without knowing it; like Medea, kill them of their own free will. He also makes search in the heart of woman,—whose intimate depths he explores,—for another instinct, that of love, in order to bring all its forces into play. In Greece, where woman formerly counted for so little, the poets had previously not found it worth their while to analyze and describe the malady of the royal adulteresses whose adventures they related or whom they placed upon the stage. Euripides was the first freely to open the field of art to an emotion which was subsequently to pervade it, and to study in woman's soul the secret stirrings of nascent desires, the shyness or the boldness of growing passion, its tumults and tempests. The tragic stage beheld what it had not yet seen: women fighting against love or conquered by it.

But the fact is too often forgotten that this painter of the real was occasionally also a painter of the ideal. Where shall we find souls that are nobler and freer from base instincts and vulgar interests, that rise in easier and more powerful flight toward the lofty regions of devotion and self-sacrifice, than in some of his tragedies? Alcestis, Iphigeneia, Macaria, Evadne, occur to everybody; other women too, less celebrated, like Praxithea and the daughter of Erechtheus, delighted the Greeks and roused their admiration. Not only a part, then, and the less beautiful part of human nature, but that nature in its completeness, with its wicked-

ness and its virtues, its mediocrity and its heroism, lives again in Euripides' plays.

The same variety is discovered in the composition of these plays. It would be very hard to state in what manner a tragedy of Euripides is generally constructed, because among his dramas we find not one, but several kinds of tragedies. There are simple plays, very poor in incident, in which the action proceeds, without great catastrophes and at a sustained pace, toward a wished-for and foreseen dénouement; others are complex, full of incidents and adventures, in which there are intrigue, surprises, and repeated changes of fortune. Some lack the orderly arrangement which we admire in the tragedies of Sophocles. Euripides indeed did not always conceive tragedy as a regular whole, whose various parts, like architectural members, must have harmonious relations with one another and together contribute, through their close connection and intimate union, to the general effect of the building. Occasionally he breaks up the unity of the temple and divides it into little shrines; and he introduces into the drama some of the incoherence of real life, which does not obey fixed rules, and in which chance is an element that has its place and rôle. This departure from the general laws of art delighted Lessing, for whom a play by Euripides was a "hybrid" thing that pleased and interested him more than the regular productions of correct authors like Racine and others.[1] Whether or not we share Lessing's disdain for regularity, it is nevertheless true that the greater part of the scenes in Euripides' dramas move us, even when they are episodic, and that where unity is lacking, neither passion nor interest fails.

Euripides, unhappily, had an enemy in a comic poet who made himself heard during his lifetime, and to whom we listen even today, though we struggle against it. Owing to Aristophanes, certain undeniable imperfections in Euripides' art, but of secondary importance, have been enlarged and exaggerated by the critics until they have become vices. With an acrimony bordering on injustice, he has been reproached for faults which are in reality venial: for his prologues, of which the usefulness escapes us, but which were not distasteful to the Athenian public; his gods, "de-

[1] *Dramatic Notes*, Bohn edition, p. 380.

vices for untying the knot," who, as we have shown, rarely "untie" anything, but merely foretell the future; his choruses, which the critics say are too detached from the action — a fact so exceptional, however, that this criticism in its general application is incorrect; his lyrics, which differ indeed in character from those of Aeschylus and Sophocles, but are neither flat nor tedious; his monodies, a bold attempt, whose success we cannot judge, to substitute song for the spoken word in the expression of individual passion. Euripides had another enemy besides Aristophanes, — chance, that has transmitted to us seventeen of his tragedies. How much more easily would he escape adverse criticism if the *Iphigeneia at Aulis* and the *Alcestis* were the only plays that had been preserved! What astonishment Sophocles might occasion if ten tragedies equal or inferior to the *Trachiniae* were unexpectedly added to his masterpieces! Our ignorance of Greek tragedies now lost casts discredit on the value of our opinions about those still extant. Nevertheless the portion of Euripides' plays we still possess furnishes convincing evidence that his genius had a marvellous and truly sovereign quality of its own: Aristotle knew no tragic poet who had so deeply moved the hearts of men.

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